Ultimate Questions in Philosophy of Religion

Author(s): Sheykh Mansour Leghaei

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

Ultimate Questions in Philosophy of Religion

:Writer

Sheikh Mansour Leghaei

:Published in print

Almas

:Digital Publisher

Ghaemiyeh center of computerized researches

Contents

Ultimate Questions in Philosophy of Religion

BOOK ID

Author(s): Shaykh Mansour Leghaei

Category: General Philosophy

point

Shaykh Mansour Leghaei, in this book delves into the philosophy behind several intrinsic faith matters such as belief in God, free-will or predeterminism, the question of evil and much more.

Chapter 1: The Sleepwalkers!

point

If you would be a real seeker of truth,

You must at least once in your life doubt,

As far as possible, all things.

"Discours de la Méthode"; Descartes. 1637.

The Sleepwalkers

Khalid Gibran, the well known Lebanese poet and artist of the early twentieth century, says in prose poetry named 'The Sleepwalkers':

" In the town where I was born lived a woman and her daughter, who walked in their sleep.

One night, while silence enfolded the world, the woman and her daughter, walking, yet asleep, met in their mist-veiled garden. And the mother spoke, and she said: "At last, at last, my enemy! You by whom my youth was destroyed -- who have built up your life upon the ruins of mine! Would I could kill you!"

And the daughter spoke, and she said: "O hateful woman, selfish and old! Who stand between my freer self and me! Who would have my life an echo of your own faded life! Would you were dead!" At that moment a cock crew, and both women awoke. The mother said gently, "Is that you, darling?" And the daughter answered gently, "Yes, !”.dear

?How can we really prove we are not sleepwalkers in our so-called life

Let me share a personal experience with you. Some years ago, I

left my hometown to live in Sydney where I still live today. As I had been missing my parents and relatives, I would often dream of being with them. However, I would .wake up realizing that it was all just a dream

During one particular dream, I said to myself "I know it's a dream again"; but in an attempt to dispute this, I decided to wash my face, thoroughly. "It is real this time," I .said to myself

!Guess what? When I suddenly woke up, I realized, yes, this was also just a dream

My purpose in this chapter is to make you aware of how important the question of existence is. Let me therefore share with you the brief historical background of this .ultimate question

Ancient Sophism

As far as western philosophy is concerned, Sophism is perhaps the most ancient Greek belief, being born there over ۲۴۰۰ years ago. Sophists believe that nothing actually exists and if it does, it is incomprehensible to man. As such, man has no ability to access it and even if it were comprehensible to him, he would be unable to .communicate it and explain it to others

Amongst the ancient Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle's crushing criticism seriously wounded these roving teachers of rhetoric. In fact, philosophy and .logic were founded as a response to sophism

Skepticism

After the demise of Aristotle, Skepticism was founded by a Greek philosopher called Pyrrho. His philosophy was that every object of human knowledge involves uncertainty; therefore, he argued, it is impossible ever

to arrive at the knowledge of truth. According to Skepticism we only know how things .appear to us, but are ignorant of their inner substance

The diversity of opinion amongst the wise, as well as the ignorant proves this. .Therefore, we ought never to make any positive statements on any subject

It is related that Pyrrho acted on his own principles to such an extreme, that his friends were obliged to accompany him wherever he went, in case he might be run .over by a carriage or fall down from a cliff

Pyrrhonists suggest that we should never say, “it is so”. Rather we should say, “ it .”seems so”, or “ it appears so

Examples of Illusion Delusion

Pyrrhonists sometimes supported their argument with numerous examples of various optical illusions such as: mirage, looming, seeing sparkling stars around when you all of the sudden stand up from a sitting position, as well as other types of illusions of length, shape, touch, temperature, etc. on the one hand, and numbers of false .reasoning and arguments on the other

The only conclusion we can arrive at from this is that all so-called human opinions are delusions caused by illusions. The followings are just some examples of many false :reasoning

Example One

.(Statement One: Water is fluid (flowing

Statement Two: Ice is from water

!Summation: Ice is fluid

.The conclusion is invalid, though the premises are valid

Example Two

.Statement One: That dog is a father

.Statement Two: That dog is his

!Summation: That dog is his father

Again, the conclusion is obviously invalid, in spite of the validity

.of the premises

Example Three

.Statement One: All dogs are mammals

.Statement Two: All cats are mammals

!Summation: All dogs are cats

Throughout the history of mankind we have learned about many people who faced these questions and failed to find a satisfactory answer. As a result, they were drawn .into the whirlpool of uncertainty and doubt

Schopenhauer, Sadegh Hedayat and Abul-Ala Ma'ari are just a few examples of many such people. Unfortunately committing suicide appeared to them as the only solution .to end all uncertainty

I would like to end this chapter with the first part of "The Simile of the Cave" presented by Plato. It is a very good example of those involved in the divided line of this world and the hereafter. In his simile we are asked to picture a group of people sitting inside a dark cave, their hands and feet are bound in such a way that they can .only look at the back walk of the cave

Behind them is a wall, and beyond that wall pass human-line creatures carrying equipment and the like. Due to the fact that there is a fire behind them they cause .flickering shadows on he back wall of the cave

The only thing that these cave dwellers can perceive is this shadow-play. Their knowledge is based solely on the shadows, which form their world. They have been sitting in this position since they were bon so they believe that all they can see is all .that there is

Please read this simile carefully and, if

necessary, more than once, trying to imagine yourself as one of the prisoners. Then, see how you could assure yourself that the world you are living in is not a mere illusion. Make sure you have thought enough about the issues raised in this chapter .before you proceed to the next

(The Simile of the Cave (First Part

I want you to go on to picture the enlightenment or ignorance of our human‘ conditions somewhat as follows. Imagine an underground chamber, like a cave with .an entrance open to the daylight and running a long way underground

In this chamber are men who have been prisoners there since they were children, their legs and necks being so fastened that they can only look straight ahead of them .and cannot turn their heads

Behind them and above them a fire is burning, and between the fire and the prisoners runs a road, in front of which a curtain-wall has been built, like the screen on puppet shows between the operators and their audience, above which they show the .'puppets

'.I see‘

Imagine further that there are men carrying all sorts of gear along behind the‘ curtain-wall, including figures of men and animals made of wood and stone and other '.materials, and that some of these men, as is natural, are talking and some not

'.An odd picture and an odd sort of prisoner‘

They are drawn from life,' I replied. ‘For, tell me, do you think our prisoners could see‘ anything of themselves or their fellows except the shadows thrown by the fire

'?on the wall of the cave opposite them

How could they see anything else if they were prevented from moving their heads all‘ '?their lives

'?And would they see anything more of the objects carried along the road‘

'.Of course not‘

Then if they were able to talk to each other, would they not assume that the shadows‘ '?they saw were real things

.'Inevitably‘

And if the wall of their prison opposite them reflected sound, don't you think that they‘ would suppose, whenever one of the passers-by on the road spoke, that the voice '?belonged to the shadow passing before them

'.They would be bound to think so‘

And so they would believe that the shadows of the objects we mentioned were in all‘ '?respects real

'.Yes, inevitably‘

[Further reading: http://www.secretbeyondmatter.com [۶

Are you inside the universe? Or is the universe inside you? Browse on the above .website

Chapter ۲: Living Awake

point

Further into the Night

!In order] to create Light]

In the previous chapter, I shared with you examples of some thinkers who worked on issues of existence, but whose solutions to such thought produced unfavourable .outcomes

In this chapter we will start waking up to ourselves in order to create light for us, and .those around us, who may be in need of this light

Firstly, let me share with you two positive examples of thinkers who also worked on issues of life, and in managing to find satisfactory answers to their questions, resulted .in a more positive outlook on life

!I think, therefore I am

René Descartes was a French philosopher and mathematician of the ۱۷th

p: ۶

century AD. He is sometimes called the father of modern philosophy.

Before his time, philosophy had been dominated by the method of Scholasticism, which was entirely based on comparing and contrasting the views of recognized authorities. Rejecting this method, Descartes stated, "In our search for the direct road to truth, we should busy ourselves with no object about which we cannot attain a certitude equal to that of the demonstration of arithmetic and geometry."

He therefore determined that one should hold nothing true until grounds had been established for believing it true. Descartes reviewed all his knowledge from sensible and perceptible as well as rational and traditional sciences.

He then invalidated all this knowledge, which resulted in all his knowing platforms from sensible to rational collapsing, leaving him swimming in the suspense of the ocean of doubt and uncertainty.

As he was drowning in his whirlpool of doubt, he realized that whatever else he doubted, he could not doubt his doubt. He said to himself: “God, I doubt myself, my senses, my mind and the world around me, but I cannot doubt that I doubt.”

He immediately concluded that if one doubts, one is able to doubt.

From this single fact which he expressed in the famous words, ‘ Cogito, ergo sum', “I think, therefore I am”, he began his investigations.

Throughout his investigation and sincere search for truth, he studied different schools of thought, which were accessible to him. He confirmed through the conclusions reached from this investigative work, his belief in the existence

of God, and accepted Christianity as the best religious path available to knowledge, at .that time

He did however agree, that there could be a better religion than Christianity, giving the land of Persia (Iran) as an example of a place where one might be able to find !such a religion which at that time, he was not aware of, to believe in

.We will investigate the validity of this famous saying later in this chapter

The Inner Intuition

Al-Ghazali (also known as Algazel in the West) the most famous Iranian Muslim Sufi of the mid ۱۱ and the early ۱۲th century AD, is an eastern example of this same .intellectual journey in search for truth

Although honored by his appointment as a Professor at the Nizamiyah University of Baghdad, which was recognized as one of the most reputed institutions of learning in ,the golden era of Muslim history

At the age of ۵۳, he gave up his academic pursuits and worldly interests in search of truth. This was a time of mystical transformation and occupied about ۱۰ years of his .life

In his book "The Rescuer from Delusion" (Al-Monqeth Menal-Dhalal) which is his account of his spiritual journey in search for truth, he states that his journey began .with doubting all his sensible and rational knowledge

He writes: "I could not convince myself that one's whole life in this world is not a mere dream. Did not the Prophet (of Islam) say: "People are asleep, they wake up when they die "? If so, what do we

!have to guarantee that we are not sleepwalkers

This situation was so puzzling to me that I ended up in bed for about two months until, my heart was enlightened by the sparkle of a divine light which needed no rational ".explanation

He solved the puzzle of his existence in his famous words: "Our existence is what we are aware of and find within ourselves". He later called this fundamental bedrock of .'(knowledge 'The Inner Intuition (Al-Kashf

Avicenna Vs Descartes

Abu 'Ali al -Hussain Ibn 'Abd-Allah Ibn Hasan Ibn 'Ali Ibn Sina, (which was Europeanised into Avicenna), the Iranian Muslim philosophy genius, mathematician and physician of the late ١٠ th and early ١١ th Century AD, discovered the fallacy of Descartes' famous words of "I think, therefore I am", more than six centuries before the birth of .Descartes

In the third section of his book " Hints Notices" (Al-Esharat Wa Tanbeehat), he argues: "If anyone claims that ' he thinks therefore he exists'; he has fallen into the trap of creating a vicious circle of circumstances for himself, because, he is trying to prove his .own existence by means of his own thought

In other words, to accept that 'you' think or 'you' doubt , you would already have ".needed to accept ' you ' exist, which is exactly the original claim

Therefore, the expression of 'I think, therefore I am ' is not the first platform of .knowledge

The fallacy of Descartes' so-called single sure fact can be shown by means of prepositional logic utilising the truth-table

.method

:The meaning of Descartes' statement in a logical structure is

.Premise ١: All those who think, exist

.Premise ٢: I think

.Conclusion: I exist

However, the fallacy of Descartes' theorem is shown by, the need to admit to the existence and accuracy of self-evident arguments of formal logic, before admitting .his thinking

(Axiom (Self–evident knowledge

In order for us to truly answer the question of our existence or any other question about the existing world, we need to know the fundamental source of human knowledge. With exception of Sophists, most philosophers, whether eastern or western, contemporary or ancient, agree that human knowledge is divided into two :categories

Self-evident knowledge -

Theoretical knowledge -

Axiom or Self-evident knowledge is the type of knowledge that we accept as true .without the need of proof or reasoning

:Examples of axioms are

- (No sentence can be true or false at the same time." (the principle of contradiction"
- ".If equals are added to equals, the sums are equal"
- ".The whole is greater than any of its parts"

The most certain of human knowledge is mathematics. Pure mathematics begins with

axioms from which other theorems are driven. This procedure is necessary to avoid circularity, or an infinite regression in reasoning and as such it is impossible to provide .any proof for them

An Axiom can be defined as ‘self-evident truth' for it does not need any analysis. Rather it is the bottom line and foundation for all types of human analysis and acquired knowledge. All it requires is attention, sound mental health, and lack of .fallacy

Theoretical knowledge is a type

of knowledge, which requires thinking and reasoning. An example of this would be .algebraic equations

If you would like a better understanding of the types of human knowledge mentioned above, then take the example of your personal computer. In order for you to run your PC for any other application, your PC needs to have an operating system by which the .computer can be run

The operating system is what the manufacturer installs in your computer and you are advised not to delete it from your machine, otherwise you will not be able to run any .other application

I believe that self-evident knowledge, especially the ' impossibility of the conjunction of contradictories ' (the law of contradiction), is the very fundamental human platform .for obtaining knowledge

Even the Sophists claim, that without such a platform, any human knowledge, would not be possible. I will endeavour to provide you with more explanation in regard to the .fallacies of the Sophists and Skeptics

Therefore, Al-Gazaali's experience of 'inner intuition' to prove his own existence is .more accurate than that of Descartes' theorem

:If you still find the above explanation a bit too obscure, let me put it to you like this

:Consider this theorem

:All Aussies are mortal. We evaluate the truth of this sentence in the following manner

.All humans are mortal-

.All Aussies are humans-

.All Aussies are mortal

:The validity of the first premise is also known from another theorem, which is

.All animals are mortal –

.All humans are animals–

.All humans are mortal

Similarly, the validity of the first theorem is also

:known from yet another theorem, which is

.All living creatures are mortal –

.All animals are living creatures –

.All animals are mortal

The ladder of theorems will continue until you end up to a premise which is in itself so self-evident that you do not need proof, otherwise a vicious circle or infinite series of .theorems will emerge, both of which are impossible

[Immanuel Kant: Prolegomena to Any future Metaphysics, Section ۴۵]

Philosophy Vs Sophism

Let us first define ‘Sophism'. Sophism is derived from the Greek ‘sophisma” meaning acquired skill or clever device. It is different from the word ‘Sufi' which is from the .(Arabic f , literally meaning "woolen" (perhaps because of their woolen garments

The rise of philosophy was in fact a response to the fallacies of Sophism. Contrary to Sophists who deny or doubt the existence of the external world, philosophers believe in the reality of this world and that this reality- whether partial or total, is accessible .and communicable

Types of Human Perception

Philosophers divide human perception into three main categories and explain that the .task of a philosopher or a logician is to distinguish between them

Real Perceptions: Consist of perceptions that have real existence from the human (۱ .mind

Agreed Perceptions (E'tebariat): Such as the term ‘human being' which is a common (۲ perception driven from all examples of human kind. E'tebariat, therefore, exists only in the mind but its examples and applications exist in reality. In other words, there is no ‘ human being' in the external world. What exists in the outer world are examples

of human

p: ۱۲

.beings

The concept of the ‘human being' is something that our mind extracts from previous experiences of numerous examples of human beings. What exists in reality is tom, dick and harry. The generic term 'human being' is an extractive concept that we drive .from those examples

Thus, ‘human being' has no existence out of our mind and imagination except in the form of its examples. Another example is numbers. What we have in real life is ‘apple', or ‘apples', then we extract the concept of ‘one apple' or ‘two apple' etc. Thus, .numbers don't exist by themselves in reality

Illusion and imagination - have no real existence, such as a man born with two (۳ (snakes on his shoulders! (۱)

Rebuking the Sophists

Instinctive Knowledge

Instinctive knowledge is the knowledge with which we are born. Like the ROM (Read .۱ Only Memory) of the computer. In computer science, semiconductor-based memory is that which contains instructions or data that can be read but not modified. To create a ROM chip, the designer supplies a semiconductor manufacturer with the instructions or data to be stored. The manufacturer then produces one or more chips .containing those instructions or data

When we study the biography of the most skeptics or sophists, we without . ۲ exception find, that none of them were actually born sophist, not believing that nothing exists or if it exists it is not comprehensible, otherwise they would not have .sucked the milk from their mothers' breast

,Have you ever known any sophist cry when it is time to laugh .۳

.This imaginary character was named ' Zahhak ', in the ancient Iranian tale -۱

use his hands to watch something, or hear a voice with his eyes?! We know, as mentioned in the previous chapter, that it is related that Pyrrho acted on his own principles to such an extreme, that to safeguard him being run over by carriages or .falling off a cliff, his friends were obliged to accompany him wherever he went

Even if we accept the validity of his argument, based on the principle of ‘uncertainty' one could have asked Mr. Pyrrho how would he be able to guarantee that his friends would be able to save him? What proof did he have of the likelihood of a real carriage ?running by

Thus, it is obvious that the arguments of the Sophists are mere fallacy and no doubt all sophists are realist in their practical life. I would dare any sophist to jump from a .cliff if there is no real life and certainty, or if life is a mere dream

Any Sophist who expresses his or her opinion, have unconsciously admitted that .۴ they have tongue to talk with, there is someone around them to talk to and there is a .means of communication. These facts are against the so-called principles of Sophism

Answers to Dreams and Illusions

The fact that we know we have dreamed is a proof by itself that there must be a real life that we have already experienced which is comparable to what we have learned about the dream world. Similarly, the fact that we know there are many optical as well as other

types of illusions, is enough to prove that there must be real sight which in comparison .to it, we conclude illusions

The same explanation can be sited about the following arguments, which although logically sound true, we know to be false. Indeed, without having any distinct and real ?measurement, how would it be possible for us to distinguish truth from falsehood

Have you ever seen anyone forge a $۱۵ note? Of course not, simply because there is no such thing as a $۱۵ note to counterfeit from. Hence, contrary to sophist's fallacy, .we may say all dreams and illusions are indirect proof of the real world around us

In conclusion, the fact that we make mistakes in some of our thinking or seeing does not denote the validity of our knowledge overall. In fact, the task of various types of science from philosophy and logic to physical sciences is to help us learn from those .mistakes

Consider the following statement: 'Some dogs are Dalmatians; therefore all dogs are Dalmatians!' Obviously the conclusion that was reached is incorrect. However, we all know the physical explanation of why and how a mirage happens or why a stick looks (broken in the water by an optical law of refraction. (۱

Answers to Logical fallacies

Formal logic was founded by Aristotle to create a mathematical basis for disclosing the fallacy of the Sophists' theorems. The fallacy of all the examples mentioned so far .and a logician can easily disclose many other such fallacies

In the following examples, I will just show you the

---

۱ - The change in direction that occurs when a wave of energy such as light passes .from one medium to another of a different density, for example, from air to water

fallacy of the first example used in the first chapter and leave the rest to your interest in logic. However, before you indulge too much into logic, remember again the fact that you are able to identify that the theorems were false, even though you can't necessarily explain why. This again is further proof for instinctive self-evident .knowledge

In the first example, a Sophist fooled us by the means of a conjuncture only. Let us :revise the theorem again

.(Water is fluid (flowing -

.Ice is from water -

!Ice is fluid-

The fallacy of the theorem is easily disclosed when the conjuncture 'from ' is highlighted in a different colour. Obviously, ice cannot be water in order to apply all .the characteristics of water on it, rather it is from water

:Let me show you the fallacy of the theorem in a very clear, mathematical way

All A = B

Some C = A

All C = B

Now it is obvious that the theorem is a mere fallacy and there is no truth in it. As a matter of fact, if there were no reality and there was no self-evident knowledge ?within each and every human, do you think we would be able to unveil the falsehood

Before I end this chapter with the last part of the Simile of The Cave, which would answer the first part, one should remember that if some thinkers do not follow the rules set, even those set by themselves, whether in logic or philosophy, this does not surmise that logic or philosophical

rules are useless; rather we should blame those who infringe the law on us, not the .law itself

(The Simile of the Cave (Last Part

Then think what would naturally happen to them if they were released from their‘ bonds and cured of their delusions. Suppose one of them were let loose, and suddenly compelled to stand up and turn his head and look and walk towards the fire, all these actions would be painful and he would be too puzzled to see properly the objects of .which he used to see the shadows

So if he was told that what he used to see was mere illusion and that he was now nearer reality and seeing more correctly, because he was turned towards objects that were more real, and if on top of that he were compelled to say what each of the passing objects was when it was pointed out to him, don't you think he would be at a loss, and think that what he used to see was more real than the objects now being '?pointed out to him

'.Much more real‘

And if he were made to look directly at the light of the fire, it would hurt his eyes and‘ he would turn back and take refuge in the things which he could see, which he would '.think really far clearer than the things being shown him

'.Yes‘

And if,' I went on, ‘he were forcibly dragged up the steep and rocky ascent and not let‘ ,go till he had been dragged out into the sunlight

the process would be a painful one, to which he would much object, and when he emerged into the light his eyes would be so overwhelmed by the brightness of it that '.he wouldn't be able to see a single one of the things he was now told were real

'.Certainly not at first,' he agreed '

Because he would need to grow accustomed to the light before he could see things in' the world outside the cave. First he would find it easiest to look at shadows, next at the reflections of men and other objects in water, and later on at the objects .themselves

After that he would find it easier to observe the heavenly bodies and the sky at night than by day, and to look at the light of the moon and stars, rather than at the sun and '.its light

'.Of course'

The thing he would be able to do last would be to look directly at the sun, and observe' '.its nature without using reflections in water or any other medium, but just as it is

'.That must come last'

Later on he would come to the conclusion that it is the sun that produces the' changing seasons and years and controls everything in the visible world, and is in a '.sense responsible for everything that he and his fellow-prisoners used to see

'.That is the conclusion which he would obviously reach'

And when he thought of his first home and what passed for wisdom there, and of his' fellow-prisoners, don't you

'?think he would congratulate himself on his good fortune and be sorry for them

'.Very much so‘

There was probably a certain amount of honour and glory to be won among the‘ prisoners, and prizes for keen-sightedness for anyone who could remember the order of sequence among the passing shadows and so be best able to predict their .future appearances

Will our released prisoner hanker after these prizes or envy this power or honour? Won't he be more likely to feel, as Homer says, that he would far rather be “a serf in the house of a landless man”, or indeed anything else in the world, than live and think '?as they do

'.Yes,' he replied, ‘he would prefer anything to a life like theirs‘

Then what do you think would happen,' I asked, ‘if he went back to sit in his old seat‘ in the cave? Wouldn't his eyes be blinded by the darkness, because he had come in '?suddenly out of the daylight

'.Certainly‘

And if he had to discriminate between the shadows, in competition with the other‘ prisoners, while he was still blinded and before his eyes got used to the darkness - a ?process that might take some time - wouldn't he be likely to make a fool of himself

And they would say that his visit to the upper world had ruined his sight, and that the ascent was not worth even attempting. And if anyone tried to release them and lead them up, they would kill him if they could

'.lay hands on him

'.They certainly would‘

Now, my dear Glaucon ,' I went on, ‘this simile must be connected, throughout, with‘ .what preceded it

This is a more graphic presentation of the truths presented in the analogy of the Line. In particular, it tells us more about the two states of mind identified in the Line .Analogy as Belief and Illusion

We are shown the ascension of the mind from illusion to pure philosophy, and the difficulties, which accompany its progress. The philosopher, having achieved the supreme vision, is required to return to the cave and serve his fellows. His very .unwillingness to do so, however, being his chief qualification

The simile is the moral and intellectual condition of the average man from which Plato starts, and though clearly the ordinary man knows the difference between substance and shadow in the physical world, the simile suggests that his moral and intellectual .opinions often bear as little relation to the truth as the average film does to real life

Now if you would like to enlighten your life as well as your fellows, and if you would also like to raise yourself from the present world situation with all its calamities, meaningless, doubts and hectic properties, to rest forever in the ocean of peace, tranquility and certainty, then join me in this intellectual journey and read the .following chapters thoroughly and carefully and think about them

!The choice is yours

Chapter ۳: Tools of Knowledge ۱

point

And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the

difference of your languages and colours. Verily, in that are indeed Signs for men of [Sound knowledge. The Holy Qur'an [۳۰:۲۲

Knowing that we really do exist and there is an existing world around us, the next question arises as to what the reality of knowledge is and how can we gain knowledge about ourselves and the world around us? What types of Tools of Knowledge do we have? What is the relation between the knower and the object known? How much of ?the real world is accessible to us

Types of Knowledge

:Human knowledge is divided solely into two types

Knowledge by presence. Like the knowledge everyone has about one's self. Such as .۱ the knowledge you yourself have about your feelings. In this type of knowledge the .knower and the known object are unified

Acquired knowledge. This is most types of human knowledge and is also the one .۲ .that we will mainly deal with in this chapter

Definition of Knowledge

Imagine a picture of a natural scene is shown to you. The size of the picture is ۱۰ X ۱۵ cm. In the picture you see a landscape that you know is about ۵ square kilometers .surrounded by tall mountains

A river which you approximate it's width to be fifty meters is crossing the middle of the view. At the river's bank from both sides you can see tall white silver firs lined up. Your family is also seated under the trees having their lunch. I could go on more, describing .further details of the picture

Now, if your friend

were to ask you if the picture you have at hand contains all the length, width, depth ?and physical characteristics of that landscape, how would you reply

Obviously not", you will reply without hesitation. All that would not fit in such a small" space. What are really on the paper are some colourful spots. Yet, it is the image of .the landscape

The function of our mind is similar to a camera, or a mirror, which reflects the image .of the object known

:Although knowledge does not really need any definition, it is sometimes defined as

The presence of the image of an object in mind." [al-modhaffar: Al-manteq]" Therefore, knowledge is the bridge of converting a real external object, in its true .form, to its reflection in one's mind

Differences between Mind and Mirror

Despite similarities between the function of the mind and that of the mirror, there are .at least five differences, which uniquely characterise the function of mind

Reflection of meaning: A Mirror reflects solely optical images. In other words, if a .١ man is standing in front of the mirror, it will show his body shape, colour and size. The mirror under no circumstances reflects his knowledge, feelings, hatred or love for others etc. However, the mind can reflect not only the sensible objects but emotion .and feelings as well

Non-correction power: If the mirror is concave it shows the object bigger than its .٢ real size, and smaller if it is convex. It has no power of knowing its mistakes or any ability to correct them. However, the

human mind can uncover the mistakes of illusions and is also able to correct them .explaining why and how the illusions and delusions occur

Self-reflecting: no mirror in the world can reflect its own image to itself, whereas the .۳ mind is capable of reflecting others images as well as its own. Rather the mind's own .'reflection is far more accurate, a phenomenon called ‘knowledge by presence

Generalization: A mirror will only reflect objects put in front of it. It has no power of .۴ reflecting any other object around it. However, the human mind recognizes and reflects sighted objects as well as being capable of linking them to numerous similar objects and applying the same rules to them. Scientific laws are derived from the .means of this characteristic of the mind

Deepening: Any mirror will only reflect the object in front of it. It cannot convert the .۵ reflected object to another mirror to reflect another object. By contrast, our mind is able to change an object known to another reflective object reflecting the reality of a third known object. This is called a ‘ Sign Knowledge ', which will be explained later in .this chapter

Ignorance and its types

Before we proceed any further to discover the sources of human knowledge, let me .share with you the meaning of ignorance and two types of it

Ignorance by definition is ‘lack of knowledge on the part of one who is able to obtain knowledge.' Thus, a piece of wood or a rock, are not ignorant as they are

.not capable of obtaining knowledge

:Ignorance is also divided into two types

١. Simple Ignorance: This means a type of ignorance where the person is aware of his ignorance. The famous saying of Socrates "Wisest is he who knows what he does not .know" refers to this first type of ignorance

٢. Compound Ignorance: Is a type of ignorance where the ignorant is unaware of his ignorance and moreover assumes that he does know. Compound ignorance is the combination of two types of ignorance; firstly ignorance about the truth and secondly, ignorance of the fact that he does not know the truth. The example of compound .ignorance is optical illusions such as mirage

Tools for Acquiring Knowledge

Sense experience

point

Nature is the first human source of knowledge and our five external senses are the .tools of accessing this source

From the time we are born, we hear sounds around us, we see objects and people around us, we touch and taste and smell things and through each we gain some .knowledge accordingly

Human beings are similar to animals at this level, with the only difference being in the level of perception between humans and some animals. For instance, the sense of smell in dogs and ants is stronger than in humans, as are the navigational skills of a .bat stronger than a human. Dogs see are only able to see the colour gray etc

In spite of the differences in depth of sensory perception between humans and animals, it is common-sensical that for a healthy human being, external senses are the first tools

of obtaining knowledge to the extend that it is said in Arabic: "One who misses a sense misses a knowledge."

However, there are different opinions among philosophers from ancient times to the present about the validity of our sense of perception. Plato, for instance, did not accept nature as a source of knowledge; his reason being the relationship between mankind and nature is interlinked and therefore cannot bring about knowledge.

Descartes and Kant also hold the view that sensory perception is good for daily life experiences yet it is not a reliable tool for obtaining knowledge. (۱)

In contrast, empiricists assert that human knowledge arises from what is provided to the mind by the senses or by introspective awareness through experience. John Locke, the English philosopher of the ۱۸th and ۱۹th century, was the first to give this systematic expression to empiricism followed by George Berkeley and David Hume.

According to empiricism sensory and sensational experience are the only tools to feed the human mind with knowledge. Thus, we can only understand what we can physically perceive. Even when one imagines a mountain of gold, is it because you have already seen a mountain of gold? Or rather because you have seen a mountain and you have seen gold? Your mind then combines these two sensational perceptions into one.

Positivists, such as French mathematician and philosopher Auguste Comte of the ۱۹th century, further developed the idea of empiricists and based their philosophy on experience and empirical knowledge of natural phenomena, in which metaphysics and theology

---

۱ – This, incidentally is in spite of the fact that when Descartes was asked about his library by one of his friends he took him to his backyard showing him the dissection of a calf as being his library.

.are regarded as inadequate and imperfect systems of knowledge

During the early ۲۰th century a group of philosophers who were concerned with developments in modern science, rejected the traditional positivist ideas that held personal experience to be the basis of true knowledge and emphasized the importance of scientific verification. In short, the main theory of empiricists is that .without sensory perception, we have no knowledge about the world

Characteristics of Sensory Perception

a. Individualist: The first characteristic of sensory perception is that it is obtained individually. For instance, a child gradually gets to know her mother, then father then .brothers and sisters and so on. She has no idea of human kind in general

b. Appearance: Sensory perception also shares with us the appearance of the objects. For instance, your eyes can only bring knowledge about colours and shape and size of .an object. It cannot show us the depth and the nature of it

c. The Present: Sensory perception belongs only to the present time. It cannot show us the past or the future. In other words, you cannot observe the events prior to your (.birth. (remember the film of past events is not the event itself

d. Regional: Sensory perception is also limited by place. Human and animals can obtain sensational knowledge of the area, which is within their vision or hearing. For instance, as far as sensory perception is concerned, we have no sensational knowledge about the surface of the moon, for in order to do so, one would have to have had

.personal sensational experience of it

Comments on Empiricism

Although it is agreed that sensory experience is the first and foremost elementary tool of knowledge for humans and animals, we do not limit the tools for which to gain :knowledge, to the senses for the following reasons

١) Senses can only show us objects. The relationship between them is uncovered by the means of rational thinking. For instance, our eyes can see the key and the lock, but the functioning relationship between them is known by the rational law of cause and effect. In other words, no scientific law could be possibly obtained without .rational analysis attached to the sensory experience

Unfortunately some of the empiricists such as Hume have denied the law of cause and effect, as it would not be compatible with the theory of empiricism. He explained that the relation between the unlocking by means of a key exists by what he calls .‘mere association' which makes us believe the relation is permanent

His point is that all human knowledge is based on the theory that ‘if A therefore B' and includes his hypothesis ‘or else'. He cannot, however, suggest a certain idea either. (!)Pay attention

It is important however to note that in addition to linking objects by cause and effect, so many objects of natural phenomena come into association with each other such as day and night, pen and pencil, book and library, yet we never relate them to each .other as cause and effect

٢) Sensory experience cannot denote the impossibility of the

impossible. For example, sensory experience cannot denote the existence of a triangle with four angles, simply because the senses have no ability to experience .such things

Mathematics is the most certain science yet it is not experimental. In fact, many of (۳ its concepts cannot be experienced by the senses. For example, there is no circle in the real world where the distance between its perimeter and the centre is exactly the .same from any point

Rational perception

In light of the above explanation, it is obvious that reasoning and rational analysis are the second necessary tools for obtaining knowledge in humans. In addition to this, there are certain types of mathematical knowledge such as geometry, which is .considered the ideal for all sciences and philosophy

However it is important to note that there are certain geometrical rules that are .universally agreed upon as to their certainty by the means of reasoning alone

This fact has obligated some philosophers such as Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant, to form the doctrine of Rationalism, which emphasises the unique role of reasoning in obtaining knowledge, in contrast to empiricism, which emphasises the .role of sensory perception to obtain knowledge

We believe reasoning is the higher tool of obtaining knowledge and is the very tool, .which distinguishes the realm of humans from the kingdom of animals

Nonetheless, we do not agree that reasoning is the sole tool of obtaining knowledge. In fact, the main problem of empiricists as well as rationalists is that each one tries to generalize a tool beyond

.its own world

Empiricists are correct in a sense that most natural knowledge cannot be obtained without enjoying sensory experience, just as it is impossible to explain to a born blind the difference between the different colours. Thus, it amazes us to learn that Beethoven, one of the greatest musicians of all time, had lost the sense that he would .have relied on most, his sense of hearing. However, he was not born deaf

Sign

One of the greatest tools of obtaining knowledge is what is introduced to mankind by .'the Holy Quran, named ' the tool of Sign

The contemporary Iranian Muslim philosopher; Motahari is perhaps the first who discovered this as a tool of human knowledge. Most human knowledge is in fact obtained by the means of signs. According to Motahari and other Muslim philosophers "epistemologically there is no difference between knowing about Napoleon Bonaparte and knowing God in a sense that we people of the ۲۱st century have not .eye witnessed any of them

Therefore, since we know about Napoleon by means of some historical signs affirming his existence and life, similarly we know about the existence of God by the means of natural, rational and other types of signs glorifying His existence. The Holy Qur'an considers the entire world "Divine Signs". For instance, consider the Ayat of ۲۰- :۲۲ in chapter ۳۰ of the Holy Qur'an

And of His signs is that He created you from dust, then lo! Ye are human beings " scattering (in the world). And of his signs

is that he created for you from your selves, mates that ye may dwell (inclined) unto them, and caused between you love and compassion: Verily in this are signs for a people who reflect. And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the variety of your languages and your complexions; verily in this are signs for the ".(learned (ones

When your teacher gives you a lesson, how would you know about his knowledge level? Is it that his eyes, face, height, or any other part of his appearance reflect his knowledge, or is it that the subject he is sharing with you is like a sign (secondary ?mirror as explained in the beginning of this chapter) reflecting his knowledge to you

When you really pay more careful attention to most human knowledge, you will agree that most of our knowledge is in fact obtained in such a manner. Therefore, the one who is limits his knowledge to whatever he can experience by his surgical knife .instead of the library has already closed his eyes to most human knowledge

Chapter ۴: Tools of Knowledge ۲

point

The starry heaven above me and the moral law within me". I. Kant"

Self Purification

point

When one hears about purification, one initially thinks of water or air purification for example. Therefore you may wonder what self-purification is all about. How are we ?supposed to purify ourselves? How does self-purification gain knowledge for us

Definition

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, the human mind is like a mirror, which, by reflecting

objects, creates knowledge about them for us. Despite differences between the mind and mirrors, there are some similarities as well.

One such similarity is that external and internal obstacles can affect the accuracy and power of reflection of both of them. For example the dustier a mirror, the less reflective it will be. Similarly, obstacles can affect the human mind, whether totally or partially. Prejudice is considered one of the obstacles of the mind in seeing the truth.

Rumi, in the First Book of Mathnawi, gives an allegorical example of self-purification. He narrates of a competition between Chinese and Romans to create a painting masterpiece. Two houses opposite to each other were given to each of them to paint. The Chinese painters gave a big list of the materials they needed for such a project to the king and finally created a magnificent painting.

Surprisingly, however, the Romans did not ask for any materials. All they did was to polish the house as much as they could. On the day of the exhibition, each group unveiled their masterpiece. Amazingly, whatever design could be seen in the Chinese house, the same, even brighter, could be observed in the Romans' as well.

From this allegorical example, Rumi concludes that the real house is the human heart and the Romans are those who purify themselves.

Self-purification therefore means the removal of all various types of dust and rust as obstructive elements in the search for truth.

The supporters of this tool regard it as the highest tool

of knowledge without which all sensory and rational perceptions are in vain. They believe at least certain types of knowledge will be gained solely by the means of self purification. "Clear your mind and soul and the knowledge of the truth is there," they .say

Examples of many who changed their lifestyle and to a certain extent gained that .knowledge are John Milton and his dream, Fodhail Ibn 'Ayadh, and Zaid Ibn Harethe

The Spectrum of Self Purification

point

Although the primary levels of self purification are necessary to obtain all types of knowledge the main spectrum of self purification as it is meant in this context is in :three realms

Intuition (۱

point

Intuition is a form of knowledge or cognitive independent of experience or reason. Intuitiveness is therefore generally regarded as instinctive knowledge that we are born with. The mathematical idea of an axiom (a self evident proposition) as discussed in the previous chapter as well as previously mentioned humane instincts are the best .example of intuitive knowledge

From the ancient Greek philosophers such as Pythagoras to Spinoza, Kant to Henri Bergson, intuition has always been regarded as the higher form of knowledge. Bergson (۱۸۵۹-۱۹۴۱) the French philosopher and Nobel laureate, considered intuition as the major source of morality and religion in "The two sources of Morality and .Religion". He also considered intuition the only means of knowledge

Believing in God is a humane, instinctive and intuitive of knowledge. This instinctive knowledge is however, sometimes overshadowed by obstacles. Particular incidences of life can stimulate the mind and bring this instinct to the

conscious as did indeed happen to Pascal. At the age of ٣١, just ٨ years before his .death, he was driving a four in hand carriage the horses ran away

The two horses at the front, dashed over the parapet of the bridge at Neuilly and Pascal was saved only by the traces breaking. He considered this a special summons to abandon the world. He wrote an account of the accident on a small piece of parchment, which he wore next to his heart, for the rest of his life, to perpetually remind him of this covenant. This accident turned the currents of his thoughts to a .religious life

In order for you to have a clear understanding of your instinctive knowledge, I need to take you on a short tour from the world of physical objects around you through to .the kingdom of animals to finally embark on the issue of human instinct

:a. The Natural World

In the world around us there are numerous physical and chemical objects. Scientists distinguish them from each other by their physical and chemical properties. For instance, the chemical properties of Hydrogen gas are that it is highly flammable whereas the chemical property of water is that under standard atmospheric pressure, its freezing point is ٠° C (٣٢° F) and its boiling point is ١٠٠° C (٢١٢° F). This characteristic is essential to all water or Hydrogen gas in the world. In other words, it is in the nature of water, any water, to boil at

.C ۱۰۰°

:b. The Kingdom of Animals

Instinct in zoology and in the kingdom of animals is an unlearned pattern of behaviour, enabling members of a species to respond approximately the same to a wide range of situations in the natural world. Examples of such are feeding, mating and parenting. Instinctive behaviour can be extremely complex even in relatively .simple animals

The remarkable navigational and communication skills possessed by honeybees are such an example. A worker bee may fly a quarter of a mile or more from the hive in search of flowers that are a good source for food. The sun usually serves as an indicator of direction, but the bee can navigate accurately, even in a moderate .breeze, when the sun is hidden by a cloud

When it finds a good source of food, the bee has the capacity to calculate an accurate course back to the hive, allowing for wind and apparent movement of the sun. Upon returning to the hive, it communicates the location of the food through a ‘dance' that conveys information about distance and direction. All these complex behaviours occur without the necessity of learning. This process of ‘trial and error' is called instinctive .behaviour of honeybees

c. Human beings

Human beings have some instinctive patterns of behaviour in common with animals such as mating, feeding and parenting. There is, however, another type of instinct, which is beyond the scope of the animal kingdom. I will call it humane instinct. Humane instinct is similar to that of

animal instinct except that unlike animal instinct, humane instinct is that found as part .of human nature, that is humans find it naturally within themselves

Types of Humane Instinct

point

Without limiting humane instinct to just the following examples, I would however, like .to highlight the most acknowledged ones

Example ١: Knowledge Lovers

The desire to learn and increase one's knowledge is instinctive in humans. This instinctive behaviour is apparent from infancy. As the baby grows up, his/her craving new discoveries increases to the extent that the baby becomes as curious as a .scientist

This increased awareness and curiosity stimulates the desire to learn, which can sometimes becomes intolerable to the parent when the child continuously bombards him/her with innumerable questions. This desire is, in cognitive psychology, known as .'“the sense of research

Abu Rayhan Birooni, the famous Iranian mathematician in the ١٠ th and ١١ th century AD, was visited in the last hours of his life by one of his jurist friends. As soon as Birooni saw his friend he asked him a jurisprudential question although he was lying .on his sick bed

The jurist was astonished at this type of questioning, however replied: “You are too ill ”?my friend for scientific discussions, are you sure you want me to answer you

With a weak voice, Birooni continued: “Yes my dear friend. Is it not better to know the answer to this issue and then die?” The jurist answered the question and fare welled his friend. Having only taken a few steps from Birooni's house, the jurist heard the cries of

.mourning relatives thus realising that a man so thirsty for knowledge had died

Another narration highlighting this thirst for knowledge tells us of Pascal who was so preoccupied with his mathematical calculations and the formation of the relativity that .he missed his wedding night

Example ۲: Virtue Lovers

The second humane instinct is one of moral and virtuous values. Kant was filled with wonder and awe at this instinct as can be seen in his saying: "the starry heaven above me and the moral law within me" . Man by nature loves discipline, social cooperation, justice and so forth. Consider the following phrase: "Do unto others as you would have ."others do unto you

These words of wisdom are universally mentioned in all major religions of the world. Such statements are needless of any experience of reason to be accepted. They, like .'the total is bigger than all of its parts', are indeed self evident

Some ethical philosophers, one of whom is Spinoza, have expressed a sense of moral values, at least as far as fundamental ethical codes are concerned, as intuitive and .immediate, hence are universally accepted

Example ۳: Beauty Lovers

Man, by nature, loves beauty. This can be observed by the way a person dresses. Although the primary function of clothing is protection, beautification also plays a major role in its presentation. When you look at a masterpiece of a natural landscape, your eyes naturally celebrate and your mind flourishes. Art is the product of this .humane instinct

Example ۴: Love Lovers

Perhaps the greatest and the most transcendental of human instincts is the

sense of love. Man by nature needs to love something and be loved by others. This .natural desire can appear in different stages of life, in various ways and situations

First exposure to this desire for love begins with a platonic love relationship between mother and child, continues at some stages of life in a romantic fashion but doesn't last until the lover discovers the real Beloved One, who is eternal and cannot be .missed

The instinct of love is the same in all stages of life, although it appears in different formats. In other words, when one looks at a magnificent landscape painting and enjoy the view, when you love your partner to the extent that you tell him/her 'I adore you', you are in fact instinctively in search of love of the real Beloved One as can be .assumed the lost is on is found

Ibn Al-Arabi (۱۱۶۵-۱۲۴۰), the greatest of Muslim mystics, nicely expressed this feeling by saying: "No one ever loves any one save the Creator; but He is sometimes hidden ".(under the mask of Zaynab, Su'ad and Hind (female names in Arabic

Inspiration (۲

Another spectrum of self purification is inspiration. Inspiration literally means 'the drawing of air into the lungs as part of the breathing process which is required to promote life'. Thus, when a person is inspired it is assumed that he has received a .heavenly gift to revive others

:Levels of inspiration include

- Creativity
- Sparking of a sudden brilliant idea
- Wisdom inspiration
- Prophesy by a diving guidance and

.influence on human beings

Revelation (۳

point

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the first or primary meaning of the term :‘revelation' is

The disclosure or communication of knowledge to man by a divine or supernatural‘ '.agency

.It is derived from the Latin word ‘revelation' meaning uncovered or laying bare

Revelation in its precise meaning may be defined as ‘a divine, infallible communication (of prepositional truths) to selected humans know as “Messengers” who observe the Truth in its unaltered form and to share it with the people or their time, exactly as it .'was revealed to them

The reality of revelation is beyond the scope of ordinary human comprehension, as they have never experienced it. Thus, divine revelation has always been and still is, one of the most fundamental of all theological questions and debates. Let us .therefore look further to gain insight in to some of the issues of Revelation

The Spectrum of Revelation

- Revelation through creation. The spectrum of revelation begins with the revelation through creation. The design and artistry within creation speak clearly of the Designer .and Artist who brought it about
- Revelation through Moral Consciousness. This humane instinct of moral .consciousness is in fact a spectrum of revelation to mankind
- Revelation through wisdom. Wisdom can be placed within the spectrum of revelation, because, like conscience, it bears testimony to the moral constitution of society. By wisdom here I mean human wisdom words that when read one naturally

agrees with the sense behind it and that the speaker must be inspired. For instance, consider the following human words of

:wisdom

Hate is like acid. It can damage the vessel in which it is stored, as well as destroy the“ ”.object on which it is poured

”The road to success is always under construction“

Revelation through true dream and vision. Another spectrum of revelation is an · experience of true dreams and visions, which some experience at some stages of their life. This is again an issue of personal experience. We see things in dreams have not yet occurred in reality. However these events will happen in due course as seen in .the dream

Similarly, you may dream of something happening to a person living elsewhere in the world, only later to discover that the incident actually took place at the same time of your dream. I personally have had such an experience. Once I dreamed that my teacher died, while I was in Italy thousands of miles away, and not even aware he had .even a health problem

Chapter ۵: Plagues of Knowledge

point

,Truth is a polished house“

,Capricious is a raised dust

,When the dust is raised

”.Even those endowed with eyesight cannot see

[Sa'di]

In our search for truth, it is vital for us to utilise our tools of knowledge appropriately. If one is searching for an optical phenomenon, you are bound to use the power of eyesight to achieve your goal. Similarly, to solve a mathematical problem you would .use mental and rational tools

Accordingly, in order to discover the spiritual secrets of the world, self-purification is a very primary tool to use. In other worlds, as there

are different realms of knowledge from sensory perception to rational and spiritual .knowledge, the tools of each realm should be utilized appropriately

There are however, different kinds of realms, which are able to affect the accuracy and precision of each tool of knowledge that a searcher of knowledge, any .”knowledge, has to avoid. Such realms are known as “plagues

An example of a plague is in a situation where a person is colour blind. He is incapable of recognizing different colours and distinguishing them from one another. Colour blindness is therefore, a plague, which affects his access to the knowledge of various .colours which can be taken for granted

Plagues of the Mind

Personal Interest (۱

The first plague affecting the discovery of truth is known as ‘personal interest'. We sometimes say ‘truth hurts', but why? If man by nature, is in search of the truth, then why can it hurt? The irony is that sometimes truth tastes as sweet as honey and at .other times is as bitter as colocynth

This is exactly what happens when we compromise ourselves in our search for truth. The plague of personal interest creeps in and the result, is treated with satisfaction if it meets personal interest, and as such is accepted as the truth, or is treated as dire falsehood, when not in the person's best personal interest. In this case the person .would rather die than face such a truth

A genuine searcher for truth must admit the truth whether it is in his favour or not. Personal interests can be material

benefits, position, tribal or national interests. Sadly, in many instances, even our .judgment is affected by personal interest

Sheikh Toosi, before writing his essay on the jurisprudential rules relating to wells, he covered up his water well at home to assure himself that even subconsciously his .personal life would not affect his jurisprudential deductions

However sometimes in life, we meet people who are very much plagued by personal interest and whose sole motive of denying religion is their fear of losing their sensual life. One Muslim lady was not attending lectures at the mosque Her reason for not attending was that ‘if the lecturer talks about Hijab, he may convince me that it is the '!right thing to do and I am not prepared to accept that in my daily life yet

Han Christian Anderson, a Danish author of the ۱۹ th century, whose fairy tales have been translated into more than ۸۰ languages, has well introduced the effect of this .'plague in his fairy tale ‘The Emperor's New Clothes

In this fairy tale, two schemers with their own personal interest, play with the truth and deceive the Emperor and all his subjects, about the new clothes that he wanted. All however, except for a young boy, who lacking any personal interest unveiled the !truth about the Emperor's so called new clothes

Pride (۲

”.There is only one veil between you and a sound piece of advice; your pride“

-Prophet of Islam-

Although it is quite healthy to keep up confidence and pride in a positive manner, these

can, however, actually be obstacles in our search for truth; especially if it establishes .a feeling or haughty attitude of superiority over others

A true searcher for knowledge should always be humble in his acquisition of knowledge irrespective of any social, age, cultural and/or religious background of the .informed

Compound Ignorance (۳

As explained in Chapter Three, there are two types of ignorance. The first is simple in which the person is aware of his ignorance, and the latter is compound where the person assumes he knows while he does not. There is a famous saying from Al-Ghazali that the incompleteness of everything is better than nothing save knowledge.

That is, it is better to be totally ignorant of a subject than have incomplete knowledge of it, for the latter always assumes he knows whilst he does not. For instance, it is better to be quite healthy than unhealthy at all, quite wealthy than in total poverty, but little knowledge however results in compound ignorance, which is not better than no knowledge at all. Ibn Sina also says: "ایاک و فطانه بترا" "Avoid incomplete cleverness."

Hypocrisy (۴

As man grows up he learns and acquires the art of hypocrisy and as such is able to hide his real face from people. As this is a learned experience, hypocrisy is less observed among children than adults. Children are honest and naïve, expressing themselves directly. When a child is hungry at a party, he/she just openly expresses .that feeling of hunger, without reservation

Many may read books, studying comparative religions

and different schools of thought, but not all of these people search for the sake of learning and certainly are not searching for the truth. . People who have hidden agendas such as learning in order to misuse information or pretend they are learned people to achieve some position, are rather hypocrites and their sheer hypocrisy .alone will prevent them from reaching the truth

In these instances, a hypocrite is not in fact in search of a truth, he has already formed an opinion and is just attempting at proving his enemies wrong. This disease is commonly observed in writings of particular religious zealots, when condemning .another religion or sect

Hypocrisy is considered a severe mental disease in Islam. In more than ۱۳ chapters of the Holy Quran this disease has been analyzed. Chapter ۶۳ of the Holy Quran is even dedicated to unveiling this disease, introducing the distorted personality of the .hypocrites

Prejudice Stubbornness (۵

When spite arrives, art departs“

”.One hundred veils travel from heart to eyes

-Rumi-

The central problem of prejudice rests on egotism, in the sense of being absorbed in oneself, family, tribe, race and even religious zealousness to condemn whatever and whoever is against the self. Frederick Copleston, in the preface of his work ‘A History of Philosophy' criticizes the authors of history for their biased approaches, yet admits .that it is quite impossible for an author not to influence his personal opinion

He assumes that his narration is free from any prejudice, yet it clearly represents an orthodox, scholarly interpretation of

history. Based on the above discussion, prejudice can be present in many situations to which the person is related, such as a particular party, group, ethnic element and .patriotism. The summation of this is personal interest

A man asked Imam Ali (a.s) to define Islam for him. The Imam replied: "I will give you an exact definition which has not been given before. Islam means submission to .truth". Islam is therefore contrary to stubbornness and prejudice

From the Islamic point of view, the search for 'truth' is like the search for a lost property. For instance, if you have lost your wedding ring you don't mind who brings it to you; whether they are from the same party, religion, creed, colour, social status, .friend or not, as long as it is found. Such finding shall be truth for a Muslim

Stubbornness is also a natural result of prejudice. Once a person forms a prejudice .towards another person or situation, it can make stubborn

In your search for truth promise yourself not to form any opinion beforehand about anything. Avoid any pre-judgment by insufficient knowledge, irrational feelings and .inaccurate stereotypical approaches

Blind Following (۶

One of the most destructive plagues of knowledge is to blindly follow inherited opinions. Naturally, when an opinion is accepted for many years or centuries, people .tend to take its truth for granted

The general acceptance of the Ptolemaic system of the geocentric universe in which the earth was considered to be stationary and motionless at the centre of the universe, was taken for granted for

more than ١٣ centuries until Copernicus, a Polish astronomer, came up with the theory .that the sun is at rest near the centre

One of the major problems of reformers with the people of their age, has always been their 'fear of any change' to the inherited systems they have been practicing, .whether it has been rational or not

Another spectrum of blind following is to follow the majority purely because of their number. For a true researcher of knowledge, the number of people is not a determining factor; it is purely reasoning and sensibility, which determines fact. Sadly, as the mass is easily manipulated, they are not usually with the truth. A genuine .searcher for truth therefore, ought to be free from the kingdom of number

It is very important when in search for truth, not to be scared or discouraged by the small number of people who agree with you, if you believe you have found the truth. Imam Ali (a.s) says: "If you have a walnut in your hand and people say you have a piece of gold, it won't benefit you, and if you have a piece of gold in your hand and ".people say it is a walnut, it won't harm you

Motives of Blind Following

- Mental Immaturity
- Common Fame
- Ethnic Identity

Superficial Observation (٧

Many superficial and trivial looking ideas may seem wrong, but when you spend more time on them and have studied more in-depth, you would then be in a better position to comment. The difference between a superficial look

and the professional observation is the difference between Newton 's observation of .an apple tree and other peoples' view

Statesmen's Influence (۸

An Arabic expression says: “People are with the religion of their kings.” This is due to the influence of the statesmen over their subjects by utilising various means. The story of a man who came to Damascus, had a dispute over his camel and the reply of .Mo'awia is very famous

Propaganda (۹

Propaganda agencies attempt to induce psychological warfare against their enemies. Today with the technological advancement of the mass media, especially those of the .electronic media, outlets available to propagandists are expanded

The story of a man who came from Damascus, met Imam Husain (a.s.) and started insulting him, is very famous in history. Also, for further example of this ‘plague', see .' the book ‘ The Gulf War Never Happened' ! or watch the movie 'wag the dog

The effect of propaganda is sometimes very strong. Take, for example, the story of the fool who was disturbed by some naughty children. In order for him to get rid of the children he told them that someone was distributing free ice cream on the other side .of the city

When all of the children left towards that place, he thought for a while and then immediately followed them. Someone asked him: “Why are you following them?” “Just .in case it was true!!” he replied

Indulging in Sins (۱۰

The last but not the least plague of any knowledge is indulging in sin. Truth is pure and will not be

achieved with impurity. Seeking pleasure contradicts and avoids discoveries in the .search for truth

Two Tips for Researchers for Truth

Make No Assumptions (١

Assumption is the first obstacle in search for truth. Assumption means to take something for granted and to believe it is true without proof. The treatment is to .promise yourself you will make no assumptions without looking at the evidence first

Do Not Justify (٢

By justification here, I mean to try to find excuses to justify an irrational issue, due to your pre-assumption influence. The classic example of such justification is how a Christian believes that people are absolved from all sins if they merely believe in Jesus .Christ. This false doctrine would justify committing sin as they will be absolved

!?Chapter ۶: Do Things Exist Only When Perceived

The Parable of the Blind Men and the Elephant

point

A number of disciples went to Buddha and said: "Sir, there are living here in Savatthi many wandering hermits and scholars who indulge in constant dispute, some saying that the world is infinite and eternal and other that it is finite and not eternal, some saying that the soul dies with the body and others that it lives on forever, and so forth. ?What, Sir, would you say concerning them

Buddha answered, "Once upon a time there was a certain raja who called to his servant and said, 'Come good fellow, go and gather together in one place six men of Savatthi who were born blind... and show them an elephant.' 'Very good, sire,' replied the servant, and he did as he was told. He said to the blind men assembled there, '.'Here is an elephant

The first blind man put

out his hand and touched the side of the elephant. ‘How smooth! An elephant is like a wall.' The second blind man put out his hand and touched the trunk of the elephant. '.‘How round! An elephant is like a snake

The third blind man put out his hand and touched the tusk of the elephant. ‘How sharp! An elephant is like a spear.' The fourth blind man put out his hand and touched the leg of the elephant. ‘How tall! An elephant is like a tree!' The fifth blind man reached out his hand and touched the ear of the elephant. ‘How wide! An elephant is like a fan!' The sixth blind man put out his hand and touched the tail of the elephant. '!‘How thin! An elephant is like a rope

An argument ensued, each blind man thinking his own perception of the elephant was correct. The raja, awakened by the commotion, called out from the balcony. ‘The elephant is big,' he said. ‘Each man touched only one part. You must put all parts ”'.together to find out what an elephant is like

Historical Background

This ancient fable is the reflection of an ancient cognitive relativism by the ancient sophists, particularly Protagoras, who began his work ‘Truth' with the famous statement: “Man is a measure of all things – of things that are, that they are, of things ”.that they are not

!Chapter ۷: God's Eye Point of View

?Who goes to heaven Dad

Leo was the Member of Parliament in my area in Sydney . One day we had a friendly chat

and he told me how stunned he was when his ١٠ year old daughter asked him; “Dad! ”?Who goes to heaven

After a long pause I said: “what I'm sure about my sweet heart is that the politicians are the last to go to heaven, but as a Christian, I suppose, those who have faith in ”.Jesus would go to heaven

I was more puzzled when she asked me: “Dad! If you were not born Christian, would ”?you give the same answer

Well, maybe not”, I answered while lifting up my shoulder. She again continued: “Dad!“ Since God owns the heaven and the hell, we need to know God's point of view, but ”?how

Religious Pluralism

The Oxford dictionary defines pluralism as ‘the principle that different groups can live together in peace in one society.' Pluralism also refers to the acceptance of many groups in society, or many schools of thought in an intellectual or cultural discipline. In philosophy however, it means that reality is composed of many parts and that no .(single explanation or view of reality can account for all aspects of life (Encarta

The definition of pluralism becomes more ambiguous when the term is used to express ‘religious pluralism', because, in this sense, religious pluralism depends, in .'part at least, upon what is meant by ‘religious

If ‘religious' is identified with Abrahamic religions or a belief in God, then our conception of religious pluralism includes only those individuals and communities that .fit under the umbrella of Judaism, Christianity and/or Islam, or Theism

If, on the

other hand, what is ‘religious' is identified with the human quest for meaning, purpose, and identity, then our understanding of religious pluralism includes all such .quests, whether traditionally religious or not

The Central Core of Religious Pluralism

The most widely recognised meaning of religious pluralism is the recognition of all different, even seemingly contradictive, religious experiences. In other words, according to ‘religious pluralism', religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism etc, are, although different, all true and their followers are all on Right .Paths

They all believe in ‘an absolute transcendence', even though they share different experiences in obtaining that goal. According to this meaning of religious pluralism, everyone should be content with any philosophy that he holds, whether he believes in God or not, or one God or many Gods, whether what he believes in is an absolute transcendence or not. Regardless of what one believes, he is on the right path and he .has a share of the truth

Fundamentals of Religious Pluralism

۱. Differentiating between the pearl and the shell of the religions

۲. Language-Game Theory

۳. Different Perspectives of one Object

۴. Limits of Knowledge

۵. Universal Mercy

Major problems of Pluralism

۱. Self-refuting

۲. The claim is more general than the proof

Problems that lead to religious pluralism

Different schools of thought .۱

Judgment between truth and falsehood .۲

Peaceful co-existence

Chapter ۸: Religious Pluralism

Islamic Perspective

Argument

Mankind without religion is a pretty sorry lot. It has never been able to survive without faith. Yet, surprisingly agreement is never reached on such vital subject. Thus, they have their own zealots who attack the religions of others, the result of which is .intolerance and contention

,Intergroup relations, especially when religion is also involved

are full of conflict and suffering. Martyrology feeds the myths, and prejudice adds bitterness to the legend. Political expediency and biased scholarship invest the legend .with the status of history

To this end, men have been suffering throughout the history from lack of toleration others' beliefs. With the cry Deus vult! (١) (God wills it) Rivers of blood have flowed as a result of religious intolerance. Crusades, Roman Inquisitions and Holy Offices established by the papacy in the Middle Ages, charged with seeking out, trying, and sentencing persons of heresy, (٢) brutal massacres and inhumane torture of Spanish people, and Albigensians of southern France, leave the man of our age with no doubt .that intolerance is very destructive activity

Thus, in order for us all to survive on this planet it is important that we respect the religious beliefs of others and learn how to exercise a peaceful religious coexistence .'under the principle of 'the right to believe as one chooses

The present paper is a brief study of the religious coexistence from the Islamic point of view. From the inadequate material at my disposal, it is not easy to fully construct the issue as it supposes to be. Nevertheless, there is enough ground in Islam to call . for peaceful coexistence

Characteristically, Islam is usually classified as violent, intolerant, oppressive and .obscurantist and opposed to enlightenment

My objective in this paper is to clarify one of the dimensions of this biased opinion. I will, with the help of God, demonstrate they way Islam

---

١ - The slogan of Christians who launched the First Crusade against Muslims by the .order of Pope Urban II in ١٠٩٥

٢ - Any religious doctrine opposed to the dogma of a particular church, especially a doctrine held by a person professing faith in the teachings of that church. The term originally meant a belief that one arrived at by oneself (Greek hairesis, "choosing for

oneself") and is used to denote sectarianism in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles of St. Paul. Soon after Christianity became established as the official religion of the Roman Empire in the ۴th century, heresy and heterodoxy became equivalent to .treason

treats the peaceful coexistence. Does Islam respect and tolerate religions other than itself, and do their followers have the right to express and practice their own faiths in ?an Islamic state

In a multicultural society where different cultures and religions are practised, should Muslims, from the Islamic perspective, integrate with, or segregate from, other parts ?of the society

:This study is also essentially based on the following material

١. The Holy Quran, as the main source in Islam.

٢. The Tradition of the Prophet of Islam and his pure progeny (peace be on them), as the role models of Islam.

٣. At the end, however, I have suggested some further resources for in-depth study.

Islam and Religious Coexistence

Although the idea of religious liberty and tolerance is a new issue in the West initiated with philosophers of ١٨ century like John Locke and M. Voltaire (١), it has been always .a simple fact for Muslims, clearly declared in their religion

A glance at the Islamic literature fully supports the idea of religious coexistence. Islam not only respects other divine religions and acknowledges their rights, but also prohibits any forms of contempt to them. Any Islamic state is also obliged by Shariah to provide welfare and support to the followers of other divine religions equal to the .Muslims

Islamic principles to Achieve Religious Coexistence

point

In order to establish a peaceful religious coexistence in society Islam has suggested :four principles

١. No compulsion in religion

No doubt, there are different factors involved in making people's opinions and faiths. The physical structure and the organic compounds, time, place, diet, education and so many other factors have

---

۱- The flavour of Voltaire's activities could be summarised in the phrase he often used: écrasons l'infâme ("let us crush the infamous one"). With this phrase, he referred to any form of religion that persecutes non adherents or that constitutes fanaticism.

inevitable effects on people's faiths. Thus, the healthy way to change their opinion is to encounter them from their origins. Utilising force and compulsion not only cannot change the heart of people, but it may in many instances increase hatred and .animosity

To this end, the Holy Quran clearly denounces the use of the force in terms of religion. It is ultimately the right of people to choose any religion they are happy with, and the duty of the Prophets is not more than educating people and reminding them of the .right path. They have never been authorised to force people to the Truth

:The following Ayat are the examples of many

[Let there be no compulsion in religion; Truth stands clear from error." [۲:۲۵۶"

If it had been the Lord's Will, all who are on earth would have believed. Will you then" [compel mankind against their will to believe?!" [۱۰:۹۹

Say, the Truth is from your Lord, let him who will believe, and let him who will reject." " [[۱۸:۲۹

And you are not the one to overawe them. Therefore, remind with this Quran those" [who reverence My warnings." [۵۰:۴۵

You shall remind, for you are the reminder. You are not one to manage (men's) " [affairs" [۸۸:۲۱-۲۲

Enlightenments have come to you from your Lord. As for those who can see, they do" so for their own good, and those who turn blind, do so to their own detriment. I am not [your guardian ." [۶:۱۰۴

If they reject you, then say my work to"

me and yours to you. You are free from the responsibility of what I do and I for what [you do." [١٠:۴١

The sole duty of the messenger is to deliver the message, and Allah knows" [everything you declare and everything you conceal." [۵:٩٩

If they argue with you, then say I have simply submitted myself to God; I and those" who follow me. And you shall proclaim to those who received the scripture as well as those who did not, 'would you submit'? If they submit then they have been guided, but if they turn away, your sole mission is to deliver this message. God is Seer of all [people." [٣:٢٠

You shall obey God and you shall obey the messenger, and beware if you turn away ," then know that the sole duty of our messenger is to deliver the message efficiently. " [[۵:٩٢

The above Ayat utterly denounce the practice of inquisition and pressuring the followers of other religions in order to change their beliefs. Nevertheless, preaching and enlightening people is permitted and is the duty of the messengers in a logical .manner

Logical debate and discussion .٢

Islam whilst respecting other religions and beliefs, may disagree with some of their teachings, finding them illogical, and hence invites their adherents to open discussion and debate in a peaceful and logical manner far from any type of fanaticism and .prejudice

:The following Ayat are the examples of this approach

And dispute you not with the People of the Book except with means better (than" mere disputation) unless it

be with those of them who inflict wrong. But say, we believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you, our God and your God is [One, and it is to Him we submit." [۲۹:۴۶

Invite all to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue" [with them in ways that are best and most gracious." [۱۶:۱۲۵

So announce the good news to My servants, those who listen to the word and follow" the best of it. Those are the ones whom Allah has guided and those are the ones [endued with understanding. " [۳۹:۱۷-۱۸

[Say produce your proof if you are truthful." [۲:۱۱۱, ۲۱:۲۴, ۱۶:۶۴"

Divine Religions, grades of one school .۳

Judaism, Christianity and Islam have a great deal in common. They are all based on monotheism and are committed to increase justice in the world, and the accountability before God. Their historic roots go back to Prophet Abraham and, as such, they are often described as 'Abrahamic Faith'. They are also the basis of great .world civilisations

Therefore, despite the followers of other religions who consider themselves the chosen nation and the only saved ones, Islam considers all of the divine religions, different grades of the one school. From the Islamic point of view each new divine religion has been the upgraded version of the previous one, prescribed to complete its .teachings

All of the Prophets are the teachers of one school, teaching different grades according to the requirements of the people of their

age, and hence if hypothetically all of them descend to earth they were to live together peacefully and each will acknowledge his successor and the one who has .come after him

An old debate has gone around between the followers of different religions as to who will go to hell and who to heaven. The followers of each religion, with no hesitation claim the eternal life in heaven for themselves, and see hell as the place of all who oppose them. Islam, despite this fanaticism, suggests a very liberal idea. The .following Ayat are vividly revealing this idea

They say: become Jews or Christians if you would be guided. Say, nay! (I would" rather) the religion of Abraham, the True, and he joined no gods with Allah. Say we believe in God, and in what was sent down to us, and in what was sent down to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Patriarchs; and in what was given to Moses and Jesus, and all the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction among any of [them. To Him alone we are submitters." [۲:۱۳۵-۱۳۶

The Religion before Allah is Submission to His Will. Nor did the people of the Book" [dissent therefrom except through envy of each other." [۳:۱۹

And they say: none shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian. Those are" their (vain) desires. Say produce your proof if you are truthful. Yes, whoever submits his whole self to Allah and is a doer of good , he

will get his reward with his Lord, on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve." [۲:۱۱۱-۱۱۲]

Those who believe (in Islam) and those who follow the Jewish (Scriptures) and the" Christians and the Sabians (۱) , any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor [shall they grieve." (۲) [۲:۶۲

۴. The Principle of righteousness and Justice

The last suggestion prescribed by Islam, to achieve a peaceful coexistence among people of different cultures and religions, is that Islam has always advocated for the principle of justice and righteousness within humankind. Muslims are encouraged to deal kindly and justly with all people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike with the exception of those who are fighting Muslims. The Holy Quran revealing the above fact :utters

Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for your faith, nor drive" you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them, for Allah loves those [who are just." [۶۰:۸

Religious Coexistence and the Prophetic Traditions

Following the Words of God, the Prophet of Islam (saww) has emphasised on the issue of religious coexistence with the followers of different divine religions. The .following are some examples of the Prophetic treatment with them

۱. "Whoever annoys a Dhimmii then I am his enemy and whoever I am his enemy I will ".be his enemy in hereafter

۲. "Whoever Muslim launches a charge against a chaste Dhimmi he will be punished in ".hereafter with a lash of fire

۳. "Whoever Muslim acts unjustly with

١- Although the interpreters of the Holy Qur'an hold different opinion as who are the Sabians, it seems they are the followers of one of the previous divine religions, being the followers of Noah, Abraham or Christians of St. John.

٢- This Aya has revealed a very controversial issue among Muslim theologians, and I have dealt with it, in a different paper.

a confederate or diminishes his right or over burden him or takes away something ".from him out of his desire, then I will be his enemy in hereafter

Imam Ali (puh), the Caliph of Muslims after the Prophet, in his Document of .۴ Instruction written to his Governor in Egypt where around ۱۵ million Christians were living, writes: "... Accustom your heart to mercy for the subjects, and to affection and kindness for them. Do not stand over them like a greedy beast who feel it is enough to devour them, since they are of two kinds, either your brother in religion or one like (you in creation." (۱

Historical Cases

(The Time of the Prophet Muhammad (saww .۱

a. The Treaty of Sinai: In the year ۲ A.H. the Prophet of Islam signed a treaty with the Christians of Sinai Land which was written by Imam Ali. A part of that treaty reads: " I (Prophet Mohammad) promise that I will not change their priests and monks nor do I expel them from their worshipping places. I do not prohibit their pilgrims from their travels, nor do I destroy their churches. I do not convert any churches to mosques and whichever Muslim does so has violated God's covenant... Muslims should not force them to anything. They must be kind to them and respect them all... Should their churches require any repair, Muslims should help them as much as they can and they (should allow Christians practise their rituals..." (۲

b. The Treaty of Najran: Najran was a village in the

Nahjul-Balagha, Letter ۵۳ -۱

Gorgi Zaydan, the History of Arab and Islamic Civilisation, vol. ۴ p.۱۲۰ -۲

border of Yemen . The following treaty was signed between the Prophet and the Christians of Najran in the year ۹ A.H. in a situation that Muslims with no doubt had an upper hand over the Christians, and yet the Prophet did not take advantage of their .miserable situation

A part of the treaty reads: " No priest or monk should be expelled from his church or its surroundings. No Muslim has the right to humiliate them. Our army shall not occupy (their lands..." (۱

It is interesting to note that according to the authority of Halabi when the delegate of the Christians of Najran came to Madina to negotiate the treaty it was the time of their prayer. They asked the Prophet of Islam if they could pray beforehand. The Prophet gave them the permission to pray in the Mosque, where they all prayed in the (Mosque facing the east. (۲

Despite the sabotage and the mischief that many of the People of the Book were engaged in against Muslims in the beginning of Islam, the Prophet of Islam never deprive them of his blessing and merciful attitude. He attended their parties; escorted their dead; visited their sick, and borrowed from them and loaned to them. The :Following story is an example of many

c. Respecting a dead Jew: It is quoted from the authority of Jabir Ibn Abdullah that: A Jewish funeral was passing where we and the Prophet were sitting. The Prophet in respect of the dead body stood up. We

---

Al-Baladeri, Fotoohul-Boldan p.۶۵ -۱

Al-Halabi, Assyrah Vol.۳ p.۲۳۹ -۲

surprisingly asked: O Messenger of Allah! Isn't he a Jew?! The prophet replied: 'Was he not a soul?!' (١)

٢. After the Prophet Mohammad

a. People of the Book are included in the Social Security: As it mentioned in the Islamic jurisprudence, it is the duty of the Islamic State to cover the basic expenditure of retired citizens irrespective of their cultures and faiths. Muslim jurists from the first century of Islam have opened a particular chapter in which they have approved that non-Muslims should enjoy equal right for Social Security, and it is the duty of the State to cover their basic expenditures from the Public Treasury if they are old or unable to work. The following story is one of their proofs:

Imam Ali (pbuh) was passing by a road. He saw an old beggar asking people for help. He asked his companions who the man was? "He is a Christian", replied the companions. Imam Ali while he looking upset said: ' You used him as much as he could work for you, and now that he is old and unable, have left him behind! Make sure you provide him a reasonable life from the treasury.' (٢)

b. Justice for All: As mentioned earlier in this paper, Islam is the religion of justice. According to the Holy Quran, the provision of social justice is one of the major purposes of the dispatch of the Prophets to humanity(٣). The following story reveals the spirit of social justice in an Islamic society.

" Imam Ali, the Caliph of Muslims,

١- Al-Bokhari, Assahih

٢- Al-Aameli, Wasaelul-Shi'a, vol.١١ p.٤٩

٣- See the Holy Qur'an ٥٧:٢٥

was sitting at the Mosque of Kofa. Abdullah Ibn Qofl a Jewish man from the tribe of Tamim passed by holding an armour at hand. Imam Ali recognising the armour said to him where he had taken the armour from, for it had already been stolen from the treasury. The Jewish man, trusting Islamic justice agreed to follow the Imam to court. Shorayh, the judge of the court was the delegate of Imam Ali. Yet, the Imam asked the judge to ignore the background of both of the parties and issue a just verdict. Utilising the Islamic judicial methodology the Jewish man won the case against the Caliph of the Muslims and the man was not found guilty. Nevertheless, as soon as he left the court, his conscious smote him, and he was impressed by the Islamic justice. He then turned back to the court and confessed that he had found the armour somewhere on the way and was happy now to return it to the treasury. Upon his confession Imam Ali gave him a gift and the man converted to Islam." (۱)

c. Don't forget your neighbor: One of the servants of Ibn Abbas, the companion of the Prophet, narrates: " One day we slaughter a sheep at home. Ibn Abbas told me to leave a share for our neighbor who happened to be a Jew. He repeated his statement several times until I asked him why he was so much concerned about that Jewish neighbor. He replied: The Prophet

---

۱- Al-Kolayni, Al-Kafi, vol.۷, pp. ۳۸۵,۳۸۶

of Islam advised us so mush about our neighbor that I'm afraid he may have a share ".in my inheritance

d. A grant Muslim clergy poetry eulogises a non Muslim clergy: Sayyed Radi, the collector of Nahjul-Balagha and one of the greatest Muslim clergies of the fourth century of Islam wrote an elegy in memory of Abu Ishaq Assabi, one of his contemporary clergyman who was a Sabian. After being criticised by some narrow-minded Muslims, his answer was I eulogised his knowledge. (۱)

Georgi Zaydan after quoting several stories as above concludes: "Muslims of early Islam after conquering a new land, would not interfere in the internal affairs of the inhabitants of that place. Christians were all free to practice their own culture and .rituals

They even did not interfere with papal edicts of Constantine regarding Christians of Damascus ... Muslim Caliphs would never force any non-Muslim to convert to Islam. They were even participating in some of their religious celebrations such as Christmas and Palm Sunday. If a school or hospital was built by the Islamic State Muslims and non Muslims would enjoy those facilities equally." (۲)

Further Readings

۱. Setton , K. M. 'A History of the Crusades' ۵ vols.

۲. James A. Brundage, 'The Crusades: A documentary Survey'.

۳. Walsh, William, 'Characters of the Inquisition'.

۴. Peter Edward M, 'Inquisition'. An examination of the European inquisition and its influence on the modern political arena.

۵. Louis Cheikho, ' Christian Ministers Secreteries in Islam (۶۲۲-۱۵۱۷)'

۶. Z. Korbani, 'Islam Human Rights'.

۷. Ann Elizabeth, 'Islam Human

Gorgi Zaydan -۱

Ibid, Vol.۴, pp۱۲۸,۱۲۹ -۲

'Rights

۸. Barakat Ahmad, 'Mohammad the Jews'

۹. Ahmad Thomson, 'Blood on the Cross (Islam in Spain)'

۱۰. Munawar A. Anees, 'Christian-Muslim Relations: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow.

Chapter ۹: The Blueprint of Life

Evolution or/and Creation

Throughout history, philosophers, religious thinkers and scientists have attempted to explain the history and variety of life on Earth. During the rise of modern science in Western Europe in the ۱۷th and ۱۸th centuries, a predominant view held among Christians was that God created every organism on Earth more or less as it now exists.

But in that time the study of fossils and natural history, a modern evolutionary theory began to take shape. Early evolutionary theories proposed that all of life on Earth evolved gradually from simple organisms. Today this has become the cornerstone of modern biology.

Since ancient time man has been trying to develop explanations for the origins of life. Different cultures have attempted this in different ways. These are some of the mysterious questions that have been asked:

۱) Does life exist elsewhere in the universe?

۲) Is earth the only planet where life has developed?

۳) Is the present human evolved from the Chimpanzee?

Evolution; the Cornerstone of Modern Biology

Today, evolution is recognized as the cornerstone of modern biology. Usually every student who chooses a unit in biology at high school is taught about the theory of

evolution. It is also assumed that evolution is in conflict with believing in God as a .creator

:The objective of this chapter is to unmask this myth and to show to you that

Evolution is nothing more than a theory not a scientific (۱

.fact

.It stands in no conflict with the Islamic conception of creation (۲

Historical background

The Greek philosopher Anaximander, who lived in the ۵۰۰s BC, is generally credited as the earliest evolutionist. He believed that humans evolved from fishlike aquatic beings .that left the water once they had developed sufficiently to survive on land

Nonetheless, the modern concept of evolution is credited to Darwin and Wallace; the British scientists of ۱۹ th century. Charles Darwin by publishing his book ' On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection' on November ۲۴, ۱۸۵۹, set off a storm of :controversy. According to Darwin

All living organisms, from microscopic bacteria to plants, insects, birds, and" ."mammals, share a common ancestor

The animal most closely related to humans, for example, is the chimpanzee. The common ancestor of humans and chimpanzees is believed to have lived approximately ۶ million to ۷ million years ago. On the other hand an ancestor common .to humans and reptiles lived some ۳۰۰ million years ago

Fossil records suggest that the modern groups of vertebrates appeared in the :following order

Jawless fish: ۵۰۰ million years ago

Bony fish: ۴۰۰ million years ago

Amphibians: ۳۶۰ million years ago

Reptiles: ۳۰۰ million years ago

Birds: ۱۹۰ million years ago

Mammals: ۱۵۰ million years ago

(Ref: "Biology" pp۲۷۵. Kate Mudie Judith Brotherton)

The Roots of the Theory of Evolution

(Paleontology (the study of fossils .۱

Fossils are ant preserved remains or traces of past life found in rocks of different ages. Biologists by measuring radioactivity in the rocks in which a fossil is embedded, .can determine the age of that fossil

Distribution of Species .۲

Scientists also learn about evolution by studying how different

species of plants and animals are geographically distributed in nature, and how they relate to their environment and to each other. Darwin visited New South Wales, staying in Sydney in ۱۸۳۶ and took examples of plants and animals to compare how they are related to animals and plants in the rest of the world.

۳. Anatomical Similarities

۴. Molecular Similarities

That almost all living organisms have DNA.

۵. Direct Observation

Insects have short life spans and therefore enable the biologists to observe their reproduction in the laboratory. Fruit flies are the example of such observation for evolutionary process.

۶. Determining Life's Origins

In ۱۹۵۳ two American chemists Miller and Urey attempted to produce the atmosphere of primitive Earth nearly ۴ billion years previously. With the mixture of hydrogen, methane, ammonia and water vapour they managed to produce amino acids, which are the basic components for life.

Comments on the roots of the theory of evolution

۱. Similarities between species do not necessarily prove they are evolved from each other. It rather suggests their unique Source of Creation as well as their unique design in the cosmos. After visiting Australia, Darwin writes the following in his diary:

"Earlier in the evening I had been lying on a sunny bank reflecting on the strange character of the Animals in this country as compared to the rest of the World."

A Disbeliever in everything beyond his own reason, might exclaim, 'Surely two distinct creators must have been at work; their object however has been the same and certainly in each case the end is complete." (۱)

۲. ‘ Darwin 's Black Box'. ‘Darwin’s Black Box' is the name of a book

p: ۶۵

۱- Ibid, p.۱۷۶

written by Michael J. Behe, a biochemist at Lehigh University in the USA . Black box refers to a device that functions but whose inner workings are a mystery. This book is a biochemical challenge to evolution. In his book, Behe argues that the idea of .Darwinism is being pushed to its limits by discoveries in biochemistry

Behe asserts that research has shown that life is based on machines, and machines on molecules. He claims that molecule machines cannot be explained by random mutation or natural selection. Thus, he says, in ancient times, all biology was a black box; that is none of the workings of life were known. Later on, scientific experimentation and observation led to greater understanding. But this greater .understanding led to even more black boxes on a smaller scale

".The Question of how life works still remains- it is the ultimate black box"

'Not By Chance ' .۳

Not By Chance' is the name of a book written by Dr. Lee Spetner in which he shatters' the modern theory of evolution. Unlike Darwin, neo-Darwinism claims that evolution works by accumulating random mutations. For example, according to a neo-Darwinist called Stebbins, it is estimated that to get to a new species would take about ۵۰۰ steps .((point mutations

Dr. Spetner shattering this theory, calculates the probability of this and concludes that it is impossible for a new species to ever originate in this way for the available time (of the Earth) is not enough to produce new species. He further

adds that the only way to explain evolution without a trial or error process, is magic .'“set up' of the genome, or as theists say ‘designing

۴. Conflict with the second law of thermodynamics

The second law is a straightforward law of physics with the consequence that, in a closed system, one cannot finish any real physical process with as much useful energy as you had to start with — some is always wasted. This means that a perpetual .motion machine is an impossibility

Life is organization. From prokaryotic cells, eukaryotic cells, tissues, and organs, to plants and animals, families, communities, ecosystems, and living planets, life is organization, at every scale. The evolution of life is the increase of biological .organization, if it is anything

Clearly, if life originates and makes evolutionary progress without any external organizing input , then something has organized itself. This is in conflict with the .second law of thermodynamics

There is a well documented, well illustrated on line article about two types of entropy (۱)and their relation with evolution. The article is ‘The Second Law of Thermodynamics' by Brig Klyce and can be found online at: [http://www.panspermia.org/seconlaw.htm [۷

Conclusions to be drawn from this discussion

۱. Evolution is not a scientific law as it is taught to us at school.

۲. Evolution, even as a theory, is another proof for the existence of a unique Designer .and Creator of the universe

۳. There is no evidence that life has developed, or even could have developed, by a purely natural process. Even Miller and Urey could never produce

A quantity expressing how much of a system's thermal energy is unavailable for – ١
.conversion into mechanical work

.a living organism

The question of the origin of life is still an ultimate ‘black box ' for contemporary .۴ .scientists

!?Chapter ۱۰: Dad! But...Who Made God

point

Bertrand Arthur William Russell; the British philosopher and mathematician of the ۲۰th century (died in ۱۹۷۰) with his emphasis on logical analysis influenced the course of .۲۰th century philosophy

He is a well known in the West for his anti-religious attempts. His work ‘What I believe' which was published in ۱۹۲۵ barred him from teaching at the College of the .City of New York, for his attacks on religion

In his lecture ‘Why I Am Not a Christian' delivered at the Battersea Town Hall in London in ۱۹۲۷, he argues the existence of God by refuting the argument of the First .Cause as presented by Christian theologians

This chapter aims at addressing his argument and unveiling the fallacy of it. I will also .elaborate on the misleading theological roots to his misconceptions of God

:Part of his lecture on ‘Why I Am Not a Christian' reads

Perhaps the simplest and easiest to understand is the argument of the First Cause. It “ is maintained that everything we see in this world has a cause, and as you go back in the chain of Causes further and further you must come to a First Cause, and to that First Cause you give the name of God. That argument, I suppose, does not carry very much weight nowadays, because, in the first place, cause is not quite what it used to .be

The philosophers and the

men of science have got going on cause, and it has not anything like the vitality that it used to have; but apart from that, you can see that the argument that there must be .a First Cause is one that cannot have any validity

I may say that when I was a young man, and was debating these questions very seriously in my mind, I for a long time accepted the argument of the First Cause, until one day, at the age of eighteen, I read John Stuart Mill's Autobiography, and I there found this sentence: "My father taught me that the question, Who made me? cannot "?be answered, since it immediately suggests the further question, Who made God

That very simple sentence showed me, as I still think, the fallacy in the argument of the First Cause. If everything must have a cause, then God must have a cause. If there can be anything without a cause, it may just as well be the world as God, so that there cannot be any validity in that argument. It is exactly of the same nature as the Hindu's view, that the world rested upon an elephant, and the elephant rested upon a tortoise; and when they said, "How about the tortoise?" the Indian said, "Suppose we ".change the subject

The argument is really no better than that. There is no reason why the world could not have come into being without a cause; nor, on the other hand, is

there any reason why it should not have always existed. There is no reason to suppose that the world had a beginning at all. The idea that things must have a beginning is really due to the poverty of our imagination. Therefore, perhaps, I need .”not waste any more time upon the argument about the First Cause

:The main elements of Russell's arguments rest under the following questions

?If everything has a cause, then why not God .١

?Has the world always existed or not .٢

My aim in this chapter is to show that it is not true that everything has a cause, and .also the timely eternity of the world does not make it needless to God

!?Who Has Made God

point

.There are three different approaches to this question

(Questioning is an innovation (Just have faith .١

The first attitude towards such very basic religious questions is to blame, stop, prevent and condemn the questioner. This attitude is observed by mainstream Christians when they are asked about issues such as Trinity, as well as Traditional .Muslim scholars

Malik Ibn Anas one of the four jurisprudential leaders of the Traditional Muslims was asked once about the meaning of the Aya ٥ in Chapter ٢٠ of the Holy Quran which ”. says: “ The Most Gracious (Allah) rose over the Throne

He became so upset that had never been seen like that. The questioner with a face down full of regrets had sweats on his head. Malik then said: “ All what we know is that He rose over His Throne, but HOW it is unknown and

”. the question is an innovation

I remember when I was eighteen I developed some doubts and questions about the existence of God. Eventually, I put my questions in writing and send them to one of .the Islamic institutions that I was aware of

Unfortunately, to my extreme surprise the sole answer I received was that apparently I had been captured by Satan and need to seek refuge with God by !reciting some of the Chapters of the Quran

Well, perhaps the only benefit of that style of answer for me was to make me more enthusiastic to discover the Truth by myself and made me determine to begin my .spiritual journey

Needless to say that I found later on that the above attitude has no confirmation in the Quran nor in the lifestyle of the Prophet of Islam and his twelve successors. They have always been addressing all questions in the best manner without condemning or .labeling the questioners with heresy or innovation

Denial .۲

The second attitude is to deny the existence of God as Russell and many others .perhaps do when they fail to find any answer for the question

As a matter of fact, the first and the second group have a similar problem in that they have both failed to find any answer for the question. The difference however between them is that the first group have just censored their minds and convinced themselves that they should have just faith in it. You tell them how can you prove it. They tell

.you we can't for it is beyond logic! And then you are speechless

Answer .۳

I believe the above question is one of the very basic questions about the existence of God and if this does not have any answer, then no religious issue shall be analysed .logically

The Fallacy of the Question

As a matter of fact, there is a fallacy in the question as presented by Russell. It is very disappointing to see a thinker such as Russell misinterpret the argument of the First Cause and assumes that the Creator of the world is part of the world, even though the !first part

I may however justify the fallacy of Russell's argument by the misrepresentation of .many Christian theologians from whom Russell is quoting

The concept of God for a typical Christian from childhood is a humane concept. The Old Testament teaches that God has created man of His own image and the central doctrine of Christianity, which suggest that Jesus Christ is incarnate son of God and is .believed to be embodiment of God in human form

Such wrong concepts of God are, I believe, one of the major reasons for declination of .religion in the West and the prevalence of atheism

Let us remember that Russell's title of lecture was 'Why I Am Not a Christian', not why .he does not believe in God

Every possible being needs a cause

.All what we perceive in this world enjoy inevitably the following characteristics

Limitation: all the objects around us from a tiny atom to the giant galaxies have .۱ occupied a limited space. They may wary in size

and volume but they are all in common is the fact that they all have a limit. In other .words they all belong to a specific time and place

Change: Einstein's theories implied that the universe was not static, but dynamic. .۲ Everything in this world is subject to change and transformation and alteration. No .condition is permanent in this world. Nothing in this world remains unchanged

They are either growing, moving and developing up or declining, perishing and decaying. Once upon a time, you are young, energetic and flourishing and after a while your health declines until you loose your energy and become so weak as your infancy period. “And he whom We grant long life, we reverse him in creation (with ”(weakness after strength

Dependence: Another universal characteristic of the living things in this world is that .۳ they are all dependant and conditional to others. In other words, everything in this .world does exist if and only if one or many other things already exist

Thus, the existence of things in this world is ‘IF existing'. There is nothing in this world that exist unconditional and irrespectively. You only exist if you had parents and if .there is oxygen for you to breath and if and if

Need: when everything in this world is conditional in their existence, they are also in .۴ need of other elements. Every object in this world is needy to numerous other objects to exist. There is nothing in this world that is needless of

others. We are all needy and indigent. Our existence is fully covered by the universal .cloak of poverty no matter how rich we assume we may be

Relativity: All the sensational objects in this world are relative whether in their .۵ degrees of existence, their size, ability, power, beauty, age etc. When we say for instance that ‘the Sun is large'. This is true only in comparison to planets like earth or mars, not if compared to super giant stars with diameters that are more than ۴۰۰ .times that of the Sun

The true concept of the argument of the First Cause is that all the living things in this world with their characteristics of being finite and limited in their extent, changeable, dependant, needy and relative need in their existence something which is unlimited, .doesn't change, is independent, needless and absolute

This Being is not part of this world or else would suffer from the same characteristics. At the same time, objects with the above-named characteristics cannot exist by .themselves. As numerous zeros do not make any number

In conclusion, the fallacy of Russell's argument is what he maintained that ‘ If everything must have a cause, then God must have a cause .' The answer is that everything in this material world has a cause. Therefore, his main mistake is that he assumed God exist along with other things in this world, and because of that .assumption maintain to refute Him as the First Cause

!?Does the World Have any Beginning

In spite of different theories about the

.beginning of the universe, still science has no confirmation about the matter

On the one hand we read from Albert Einstein in his theory of General Relativity which is considered the most accurately tested theory known to science, that the universe is expanding away from a point and if so then it had a beginning at that point. If the .universe had a beginning then it must have a Beginner

Dr. Wendy L. Freedman in his article ‘The Expansion Rate and Size of the Universe' : published in Scientific American July ۲۰۰۱ edition

At present, several lines of evidence point toward a high expansion rate, implying “ that the universe is relatively young, perhaps only ۱۰ billion years old. The evidence also suggests that the expansion of the universe may continue indefinitely. Still, many astronomers and cosmologists do not yet consider the evidence definitive. We .”actively debate the merits of our techniques

On the other hand, according to Carl Sagan in his introduction to Stephen Hawking's best sell; ‘A Brief History of Time', the book represents an effort to posit ‘a universe .'with no edge in space, no beginning or end in time, and nothing for a Creator to do

.One should however, bear in mind that all of these are just proposals

The number of stars visible to the naked eye from earth has been estimated total ۸۰۰۰; ۴۰۰۰ for each hemisphere. The astronomers have calculated that the stars in the Milky Way number in the hundred of billions. The Milky Way in turn is

also one of several hundred million such galaxies. Astronomers estimated that there .are about ۵۰ billion galaxies in the universe

The question of why the universe exists remains the ultimate mystery. Professor Derek Parfit, a contemporary philosopher and a senior lecturer at New York University , declares that "No question is more sublime than why there is a Universe: ".why there is anything rather than nothing

Derek Parfit, "Why Anything? Why This?" London Review of Books ۲۰/۲ (January ۲۲, .۱۹۹۸), p.۲۴

?Does the world need a Creator because it is timely finite

Russell in his refute of the first Cause has also assumed that the reason because of which this world needs a Creator is that it is timely finite and a beginning for its :existence. Part of his lecture reads

There is no reason to suppose that the world had a beginning at all. The idea that' .'things must have a beginning is really due to the poverty of our imagination

Similarly Hawking also states: " The universe would not be created, not be destroyed; (it would simply be. What place, then for a Creator?" (A Brief History of Time

?If the Big Bang theory is such a good theory, why doesn't it explain the origin of life

Because it isn't designed to do so, nor will it ever be, at least not in the way you want it to. You are asking too much of a single physical theory, and perhaps not realizing that .no single theory can ever explain ALL aspects of reality at any arbitrary scale

Big Bang theory will help us answer the

BIG questions of the general conditions of matter, space and time. It will, hopefully, tell us why certain physical constants are as they are, and how galaxies were formed.

It will not be able to tell us how individual stars and planets formed because that is covered by a second rank of physical theories which only depend on very local physics at a scale millions of times smaller than a galaxy in size.

Big Bang will tell us why certain 'life' issues were settled by nature the way they were such as the initial hydrogen to helium abundance ration, and the age of the universe being comfortably longer than it takes for chemistry to create living systems.

But the details of how these chemistries led to life...and particular sentient life...are not covered by the physics of Big Bang theory because the timescales and length scales that are relevant to life are trillions upon trillions of times smaller than the scales covered by Big Bang theory.

Historical Background

There are so many literature and on going debates amongst Christian theologians tackling such naturalistic assumption that the universe has always existed.

Christian as well as Muslim theologians believed that the world is timely finite and limited and in this way they proved the existence of God. In other words, the assumed the sole reason they can prove the existence of God is if the universe has beginning and then it needs a Beginner. According to theologians the reason of being in need of a cause is

.that something was not and then it is

Muslim philosophers by contrast, proved that the reason because of which a being needs a cause is not that it is timely limited. According to Muslim philosophers the .reason for the Creator is possibility of being and essential need

This is considered of the causes of the glories of Islamic philosophy. Muslim philosophers believe that the discussion about whether all things must have a beginning or not is an imaginary discussion. The outstanding contemporary Muslim philosopher Professor Al-Tabataba'i in his ' The Fundamentals of Philosophy the :Methods of Realism ' states

Our mind is used to timely events and hence, imagines a hollow space and an " unlimited time for the beginning of the world, then imagines a being like an infant in the cradle of space which is handed over to the nurse of the time who was ready in ". advance to develop it

Therefore, Russell is correct in that the idea that things must have a beginning is due to the poverty of our imagination as the late Al-Tabataba'i also stated, but he is wrong in concluding that this would make the world needless to any Creator. For according to Muslim philosopher all beings are divided into two: possible beings and Necessary .Being. Possible beings is in need of Necessary being for its being

Chapter ۱۱: The Fingerprints of God

point

We certainly show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it ' becomes manifest to them that it is the Truth. Is

(it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things ?' (۱

Introduction

We go about our daily lives understanding almost nothing of the world around us. We give little thought to the machinery that generates the sunlight that makes life possible for us. The gravity that glues us to an Earth that would otherwise send us spinning off into space, or to the atoms of which we are made and on whose stability .we fundamentally depend

Maybe except in our childhood, few of us get a chance to wonder why nature is the way it is. We have taken everything in this world so much for granted that do not realize what would happen to all our daily activities if life on this melting planet was .otherwise

The purpose of this chapter is to share with you the testimony of all living things including every single cell in your body that there is an Omni-intelligent Creator who has designed them and there is no room for chance or dice playing in the story of .creation

If you have ever been wondering where can you find God, this chapter is a must for you to read. Nevertheless, all I can do is to show you the Signs for His presence and .His fingerprint on every being including yourself

His Fingerprint on Atom

Atom is the smallest physical building block of nature. In ancient Greek philosophy the word "atom" was used to describe the smallest bit of matter that could be conceived of. This "fundamental

---

Refer to Ayah ۴۲:۵۳ -۱

particle", to use the present-day term for this concept, was thought of as ."indestructible; in fact, the Greek word for atom (atoms) means "not divisible

All atoms of any given element behave in the same way chemically. Thus, from a .chemical viewpoint, the atom is the smallest entity to be considered

The lightest of all atoms, hydrogen, has a diameter of approximately ۱۰ -۸ cm and a mass of about ۱.۷ × ۱۰ -۲۴ g. An atom is so small that a single drop of water contains more than a thousand billion billion atoms. Since atoms are hundreds of times smaller than the wavelength of visible light, they could not even be revealed by any optical .microscope, no matter how powerful

Each atom has two particles; proton with a positive charge and neutron which is an uncharged particle. The number of proton and neutron in every atom is exactly the same. The mass of a proton is ۱.۶۷۲۶ × ۱۰ -۲۷ kg, or approximately ۱,۸۳۶ times that of an electron. In a simple language a proton weigh nearly one million billion of a gram and !still an electron is ۱۸۳۶ times lighter than proton

The structure of an atom is explained in quantum physics in that electrons move in definite orbits at a considerable distance from the nucleus with the speed of ۳۰۰۰ kilometers per second. This means in every second an electron moves two million .times around itself

Having considered all sophisticated and superlative structural design of an atom, is not just the

matter of a common sense to acknowledge the intelligence of its Designer? And if every atom is to be considered a word of God and a fingerprint of His creation, .imagine how many uncountable signs is already out for you to know Him

:Let us now recite together

And if all the trees on the earth were pens and the sea were ink (wherewith to write),“ with seven seas behind it to add to its supply, still the Words of God would not be (exhausted. Verily, God is All-Might, All-Wise.” (١

His Fingerprint on Insects

Perhaps with the exception of mainly bees and earthworms our usual response to insects is to ignore or to annihilate them. Most people, if they could, would deny .insects’ planetary citizenship

Yet, in the final analysis, life on earth would be impossible without insects; they are .essential links in the ecological chain

Nearly out of ١١ million species of life on earth, one million species are the insects and there are still more to be discovered. Some insects are so small that can easily go .through the whole of a needle

In spite of their extreme variety in their superficial appearance, there are many .common characteristics in their anatomy, reproductive systems, social structure, etc

For instance, the eyes of all insects are compound with many facets. In the case of a .housefly for example this is as many as ۴٠٠٠ facets

The ways insects communicate are amazingly different. Some by increasing and decreasing of the light such as flies, or by the means of smelling such as

---

١- Refer to ayah ٣١:٢٨

.ants, or waggle-dance as in bees

In order for the honeybees to manufacture a kilogram of honey, every worker bee needs to ingest the nectar of the flowers ۶۵۰۰۰ times and convert it to honey in special sacs in their oesophagi and the total colony of the bees fly over ۴۵ to ۶۴ million flowers .to complete the production of a kilogram of honey

?Really, how would a worker bee distinguish poisonous flowers from the sweet ones

?How this factory of honey manufacturing has been made within this tiny insect

:Let us recite together

(And your Lord revealed to the bee…” (۱“

Many chapters of the Quran have the names of animals and insects such as ‘bee' .((chapter ۱۶), ant (chapter ۲۷), spider (۲۹

His Fingerprint on Earth

point

(And in the earth are Signs for those who have faith with certainty.” (۲“

Earth is the third planet from the Sun. It is like an elliptical spaceship which weigh .۶.۶۰۰۰ million billion tones

The Earth has ۸ different movements. In common with the entire solar system, the Earth is moving through space at the rate of approximately ۷۲۰۰۰ km/h. The Earth and its satellite, the moon, also move together in an elliptical orbit about the Sun with an approximate speed of ۹۴۰,۰۰۰ km over one solar year of nearly ۳۶۵ days making .seasons

It also travels along it at a velocity of about ۱۰۶,۰۰۰ km/h. The core temperature of the .Earth is up to ۱۹۵۰۰۰ degrees which is ۳۵ times more than the surface of the Sun

Atmosphere

The Earth is protected by a mixture of

۱- Refer to ayah ۱۶:۶۸

۲- Refer to ayah ۵۱:۲۰

gases that has a gravitational field which is strong enough to prevent the gases of the Earth from escaping on the one hand, and to prevent the harmful rays of the Sun as .well as many celestial meteors hitting the Earth on the other hand

Everyday ۲۰ million meteors with the speed of about ۵۰ km/s are shot towards the Earth and its only due to the atmosphere of the Earth that we even do not realize their exposure and destruction. Do you know one of those ۲۰ million meteors is enough to ?destroy life on earth

:Let us then recite together

And We have made the heaven (above the Earth) a roof, safe and well guarded. Yet,“ (they turn away from its Signs.” (۱

Do you know if the diameter and circumference of the Earth were a little bit more or ?less, it affects its gravity and life is destroyed on earth

Have you ever imagined if the distance of the Earth from the Sun were a little bit more or less than it is, the Earth would be either too hot live and all the water would have ?been evaporated, or too cold and frozen and again no life would be possible

:Can you really say that all these are so accurately designed just by chance? Or

(And there is a measure with Him of everything” (۲“

Water

Water is the major constituent of living matter. From ۵۰ to ۹۰ percent of the weight of living matter is water. Blood in animals and sap

---

Refer to ayah ۲۱:۳۲ -۱

Refer to ayah۱۳: ۸ -۲

in plants consist largely of water and serve to transport food and remove waste .material

Ocean covers about three-quarters of the Earth's surface. Nonetheless, it is not ?drinkable. So how can all living organisms benefit from it

God is He Who sends the winds, so that they raise clouds, and spread them along the “ sky as He wills, and then break them into fragments, until you see rain drops come [forth from their midst.” [۳۰:۴۸

When rivers of water flow towards the ocean they carry the minerals with them to make the ground suitable for farming on the one hand, and keep the ocean salty to avoid the stink. However, since such salty water is not suitable for drinking, it has to .be refined

Unlike other liquids, water has unusual physical and chemical properties. It is one of very few naturally occurring liquids with evaporation properties. Evaporation system .purifies the water from all the minerals like a huge refinery and drop from the clouds

!?Do you not see the intelligence behind all these natural processes

Imagine if the raindrops were not in their ordinary diameter sizes, and would have poured like a river, do you thing still they would be useful?! Which wisdom and !?intelligence had made the water cycling system in the present manner

His Fingerprint on Sun

point

The Sun is the star that by the gravitational effects of its mass, dominates the solar system, the planetary system that includes the Earth. The Sun has a diameter of ۱,۳۹۰,۰۰۰ km. The total mass of Sun is ۲۰۰ billion

.billion tones. The Sun is ۱۰ million times bigger than the Earth

Sun: the main supporter of life on earth

The Sun furnishes directly or indirectly all of the energy supporting life on Earth. Some :of its very obvious benefits are

The Sun is made up primarily of hydrogen. Every second it generates more than ۶۵۷ (۱ million tones of hydrogen, which by the radiation of its electromagnetic energy supports life on Earth. This is because all foods and fuels are derived ultimately from .plants that are using the energy of sunlight

All planets in the solar system are moving on their orbits around the Sun due to the (۲ .gravitational effects of the Sun, or else, they would destroy immediately

If there were no energy released from the Sun, the Earth would have been an (۳ .uninhabitable frozen planet

Without the energy of the sunlight, no plants would photosynthesize, and no (۴ .evaporation for raining would occur

.And the list is much longer than our patience

Scientists believe the Sun has been generating such a vast energy for about ۴.۵ billion years and can continue for another ۴.۵ billion years! On the other hand, as I mentioned !it generates ۶۵۷ million tones of hydrogen every second

!?Could you calculate how much energy it has generated so far

?Where all this energy is coming from

:Let us recite together

And there is not a thing, but with Us are the stores thereof. And We send it not down“ (except in a known measure.” (۱

”.And of His Signs are the night and the day, and the Sun and the Moon“

Refer to ayah ۱۵:۲۱ -۱

(۱)

His Fingerprint on Heavens

Let us now turn our gaze towards the starry sky above us. Do we know what is really ?out there? Can we find the fingerprints of God there too

Here we are on the planet Earth that is one of the planets of the solar system. The .solar system is located in the Milky Way galaxy; the large disc-shaped galaxy

The diameter of the disc is about ۱۰۰,۰۰۰ light years. (unit of length used in astronomy to measure vast distances. It is equal to the distance that light travels in a mean solar or astronomical year. At the rate of approximately ۳۰۰,۰۰۰ km/s, a light year is (approximately equal to ۹,۴۶۱,۰۰۰,۰۰۰,۰۰۰ km

The number of stars visible to the naked eye from Earth has been estimated to total ۸,۰۰۰, of which ۴,۰۰۰ are in the northern hemisphere of the sky and ۴,۰۰۰ in the southern hemisphere. At any one time during the night in either hemisphere, only about ۲,۰۰۰ stars are visible. The others are obscured by atmospheric haze, especially near the .horizon, and by faint sky light

Astronomers have calculated that the stars in the Milky Way, the galaxy to which the Sun belongs, number in the hundreds of billions.. The individual stars visible in the sky are simply those that lie closest to the solar system in the Milky Way. Andromeda is the companion galaxy to our Milky Way. Every group of galaxies makes a cluster of .galaxies

Our galaxy is one of a small group of about ۲۰ galaxies that astronomers

---

Refer to ayah ۴۱: ۲۷ -۱

call the Local Group. The Milky Way and the Andromeda Galaxy are the two largest .members, each with ١٠٠ to ٢٠٠ billion stars

The Milky Way and Andromeda are only two of several hundred million such galaxies visible through large modern telescopes. The largest known galaxy has about ١٣ times .as many stars as the Milky Way

There is a cluster which consists of about ٣٠٠ galaxies amidst Great Bear moving away .in an opposite direction to Milky Way with the speed of ٧۵٠ miles per second

There is also an amazing galaxy which its speed is one third of the light speed. This means, its light visible to our eyes today has left the galaxy more than ۴٠٠٠ million years ago, and by the time we see it, it has already moved ۶۵٠٠ million light years !away from its previous location

The most massive galaxy that was discovered only a year ago by NASA has something like ۴ trillion solar masses. This is only our universe and still what we don't !know is by far greater

Astronomers today are suspecting parallel universes, which are yet to be detectable !from within our universe

?Could there be other universes outside of our own

Dr. Sten Odenwald (Hughes STX) for the NASA writes in response to the above :question

If our universe is infinite, then you can still have an infinite number of other separate " universes outside it because so far as humans understand infinity, it can .accommodate an infinite number of infinite things

If the universe is finite…like a

ball...then you can think of a bunch of coconuts floating in an infinite ocean, and again you end up with the possibility of having an infinite number of finite universes .embedded in some vaster kind of space

Yes there could be other universes out there, but they would be unobservable no matter how old our universe became...even infinitely old!! So, such universes have no ".meaning to science because there is no experiment we can perform to detect them

[http://image.gsfc.nasa.gov/poetry/ask/ask/a١١٢١٥.html [٨

(Are you more difficult to create or is the heaven that He constructed?"(١"

This is the creation of Allah, so show Me that which those besides Him have created.""
((٢

Expanding Universe

Since ١٩٢٩ the astronomer Edwin P. Hubble provided the first evidence that the entire universe is expanding. Later on the general theory of relativity confirmed the .expansion of the universe in just the way Hubble observed

Scientific American' in its current issue (July ٢٠٠١) printed an article about the' .measurement of the expansion rate and the size of the universe

!?Don't you still see the fingerprint of the Creator

With power did We construct the heaven. Verily, We are expanding the vastness of " (space thereof." (٣

Prominent Scientists Find the Fingerprints of God

شهد الله انه لا اله الا هو و الملائكه و اولوالعلم قائما بالقسط

:Dr. Ross sees the imprint of the Creator's hand in the Universe (١

Wherever we look....we see evidence of God's design... [When] we examine the" cosmos on its largest scale or its tiniest, His handiwork is evident...God's fingerprints

(are visible." (۴

.Dr. Hugh N. Ross graduated from UBC with a B.Sc)

۱- Refer to ayah ۷۹:۲۷

۲- Refer to ayah ۳۱:۱۱

۳- Refer to ayah ۵۱:۴۷

۴- The Creator and the Cosmos , p. ۱۴۶

in Physics. Subsequently he earned M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in Astronomy from the (. University of Toronto

:Professor Jay Roth of the University of Connecticut , says (٢

There is so much in the physical nature of the universe we inhabit, the exact " balances of everything needed to support life, the piling of coincidence on coincidence, everyone of which is vitally necessary for the development of a stable star with a planet that can support life. These physical properties of the universe lead (me to favor a Designer or Creator ..." (١)

."Einstein famous saying: "God does not play dice (٣

Coughlin [of the Los Angeles tabloid Illustrated Daily News, in hot pursuit of asking" Einstein a provocative, headline-inducing question] found the right moment while tailing the car that was speeding the couple [the Einstein] north on the coast road to Pasadena . It had stopped to let Einstein stroll over to a small headland known as .Sunset Cliffs, where he stood gazing at the sea and sky

Seizing the moment, Coughlin leaped from his car, the question on his lips, followed by Spang, his camera at the ready. "Doctor", Coughlin said, "is there a God?" Einstein .stared at the water's edge some twenty feet below, then turned to his questioner

Coughlin later wrote: "There were tears in his eyes, and he was sniffing. Spang shot the picture as Einstein was hustled away before he could answer me. "Well," I said, "the way he reacted, he believes in God. Did you ever see

---

Cosmos, Bios, Theos , p. ١٩٨ -١

(such an emotional face?" (١

:Stephen Hawking expresses the view (۴

It would be very difficult to explain why the universe should have begun in just this " " .way; except as the act of a God who intended to create beings like us

:Paul Davies states it (۵

" .The impression of design is overwhelming "

In ١٩٩٧ the leading science journal Nature published a survey of religious belief (۶ among scientists in the United States. The authors found that nearly ۴٠ percent of the ١٠٠٠ scientists surveyed said they believed in a personal God– 'a God in intellectual and affective communication with humankind, i.e. a God to whom one may pray in .(expectation of receiving an answer.'(٢

?Why some scientists do not believe in God

A survey was published in 'Nature' in ١٩٩٨ entitled 'Leading Scientists Still Reject God'. That survey revealed that of the 'elite' biologists of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States , approximately ٩۵ percent were men or women who did not ?believe in a personal God! (٣)Why would this be

:There are many factors involved. I shall in this brief mention only two out of many

!God is not observed in my lab (١

Popular scientific dogma holds that if something can't be proven scientifically, i.e.; by .observation and experimentation, it really doesn't exist

.god of Christianity does not exist (٢

In many instances when a western scientist rejects the existence of God, as a matter of fact, he or she is rejecting the Christin concept of god in terms of resurrection of Jesus and being son of god

---

۱- Einstein: A Life, Denis Brian, Page ۲۰۶.

۲- Nature, vol. ۳۸۶, ۱۹۹۷, pp. ۴۳۵-۳۶

۳- Nature, vol. ۳۹۴, ۱۹۹۸, p.۳۱۳

or god and things like that which is of course nothing more than a myth, and has nothing to do with the true concept of a unique God who is the Creator of all including prophet Jesus. Hence, according to Christians all Jewish people and Muslims are atheists for they do not believe in Jesus as God!

References for further study

۱) The Living Universe: Scientific Evidence of God's Design, Dr. Nigel Tomes

۲) The Creator and the Cosmos: How the greatest scientific discoveries of the century reveal God: Dr. Hugh Ross

۳) The God Factor: ۵۰ scientists explain why they believe in God. Edited by Dr. John F. Ashton. First published in Australia in ۲۰۰۱

۴) Mysteries Marvels of Nature: Jennifer Owen

۵) ۹] http://www.nature.com]

۶) ۱۰] http://www.sciam.com]

۷) ۱۱] http://www.nasa.gov]

۸) ۱۲] http://www.encarta.com]

Chapter ۱۲: Einstein's Paradox

God's Omniscience and Man's Freedom

Introduction

Many people when they fail in their lives, they relate it to their destiny. They don't want to admit they made a mistake and hence, they failed in their exams, or marriage, business, etc. The concept of determinism or free will plays a central role in our thinking about the world particularly in our apportioning praise and blame.

Quantum theory explains in principle how to calculate what will happen in any experiment involving physical or biological systems, and how to understand how our

.world works

We can, for instance, determine the exact time of the solar eclipse on ۴ December ۲۰۰۲ in which ۷۲٪ of the Sun will be covered and is visible in Australia. This foreknowledge lead us to the fact

p: ۹۱

.that determinism rules in the physical world

The question that this article is dealing with is ‘can we predetermine the human behaviour’ and if his behaviour is foreknown whether by other humans or a divine ?knowledge, how can we hold him responsible for his/her action

Nothing has been more terrible for humans throughout the history than admitting that his destiny is predetermined and he has no choice in it. Freedom has been and will be always the most pleasant word for mankind. Hence, nothing can disturb his .mind that knowing that all his actions are subdued by a superpower

This is the secret why the issue of determinism versus free will has been always and .issue of concerns for philosophers and thinkers throughout the history

Albert Einstein (۱۸۷۹-۱۹۵۵) is perhaps the best well-known scientist of the ۲۰th century. His theory of ‘General Relativity’; the most accurately tested theory known to science, lead him to acknowledge that God brought the universe into existence and that He is Intelligent. Yet, he was still puzzled with the paradox that” if God is Omniscient then ”!?how is it possible to hold man responsible for his deeds

When the rabbis and persists came to congratulate him on his discovery of God, he :said to them

If this being is Omnipotent then every occurrence, including every human action,“ every human thought, and every human feeling and aspiration is also His work; how is it possible to think of holding men responsible for their deeds and thoughts before ?such an almighty Being

In

giving out punishment and rewards He would to a certain extent be passing judgment on Himself. How can this be combined with the goodness and righteousness ascribed ”?to Him

Unfortunately, none of the clergy Einstein encountered ever gave him a satisfactory answer to his objection. Typically, they responded by saying that God has not yet revealed the answer. They encouraged him to endure patiently and blindly trust the .All-Knowing One

Being puzzled with this question, Einstein, like many other powerful intellects through .the centuries, ruled out the existence of God, despite believing in a Creator

The aim of this chapter is to suggest an answer to this on going debate about one of the most fundamental questions of human nature in a unique style presented by .prominent Muslim philosophers

Definition

The question is whether man's behaviour, thinking, and feeling are driven by something called free will, or everything is predestined and determined. In other words, is the human behaviour like other objects and events in the world determined under certain cause/s and once the cause/s being given, the event follows invariably, or human behaviour is exempted from this law for human mind has the power or ability to choose a course of action or make a decision without being subject to restraints imposed by antecedent causes, by necessity, or by divine .predetermination

On the one hand, we feel so strongly that we have behavioural choice. On the other hand, modern biology describes humans as mechanisms that follow all of the same deterministic rules as other objects

in the universe. How can reconcile our feeling of Free Will with the idea that we are ?mechanical components of a mechanical universe

Is none of us really responsible for his/her action? Is freedom to choose an illusion, a ?myth

Scope

The validity of either of free will and determinism play a vital role for people and scientists in all different walks of life; from an average man on the street to .psychology, sociology, ethics, religion, law and philosophy

Psychology

There is a clear dilemma in explaining human behaviour through psychological principles. On the one, hand if psychology is a science of behaviour, then there should be laws allowing the prediction of behaviour, just as there are gravitational laws to predict the behaviour of a falling object. On the other hand, objects have been raised by individuals who believe that humans control their own behaviours and possess free .will

The behaviourists, for instance, are the most obvious proponents of determinism, dating back to Jon B. Watson who made one of the most deterministic assertions ever: "Give me a dozen healthy infants... and my own specified world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee to take anyone at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select-doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant, chief, and yes, even beggar ".man and thief

Other psychologists like William James, who was interested in religion and believed in free will, was reluctant to abandon the concept that behaviours were not free. At one point, he suggested that mind and body

operated in tandem, whereas on another occasion he concluded that they interacted. .Clearly, James struggled with the issue, and like others was unable to resolve it

Ethics

The validity of free will has also been a subject of considerable debating among ethical philosophers. It would appear that a system of ethics must imply free will, for the denial of the ability to choose a course of action would seem to negate the .possibility of moral judgment

A person without moral judgment is not responsible for his or her actions. In an attempt to resolve this problem, ethical philosophers have taken a great variety of .position, ranging from absolute determinism to absolute libertarianism

Law

Determinism has its impact on the court cases as well. The most famous American trial lawyer of the ۲۰th century, Clarence Darrow, was engaged to defend the murderers who had confessed. With the following speech he convinced every jury that his clients were not morally responsible for their actions and hence they don't .deserve the death penalty

 Every one knows that the heavenly bodies move in certain paths in relation to each other with seeming consistency and regularity which we call [physical] law. … No one attributes freewill or motive to the material world. Is the conduct of man or the other animals any more subject to whim or choice than the action of the planets? …

We know that man's every act is induced by motives that led or urged him here or there; that the sequence of cause

and effect runs through the whole universe, and is nowhere more compelling than ".with man

 "[Man's] legs are levers with which he walks. His back is a lever, by which he is able to lift things, through the contraction of the muscles. His arms are levers which he uses in all the activities of life. There is nothing about him that anybody can find ... ".which isn't mechanical

 "The principal thing to remember is that we are all the products of heredity and environment; that we have little or no control, as individuals, over ourselves, and that ".criminals are like the rest of us in that regard

Prof. Norman Swartz: Free will and Determinism: [http://www.sfu.ca/philosophy/swartz/freewill۱.htm [۱۳

The belief that man's feelings, thoughts and behaviours are all forced on him by one or more determinants has changed the concept of crimes and bad behaviour to be seen as a symptom of illness which requires treatment not punishment. Thus, prisons .and jails must be abolished and locked hospital wards substituted for them as needed

Fallacy of Darrow's argument

If Leopold and Loeb were not morally responsible for their behavior, it was because of what others had done to them. But these others, in turn, were not morally responsible for what they had done, since they were the product of what had earlier been done to .them

And so on, and so on. The argument works like a line of dominos, it is - in effect - the domino theory of moral non-responsibility. If someone is to be regarded

as not morally responsible for what he does because he is the product of someone .else's actions, then, ultimately, no one is responsible for anything he/she does

It is interesting to note that one of Darrow's biographers reports that although Darrow constantly insisted that his clients did not deserve blame, he himself was a very vain, prideful, man who thought that he, himself, deserved high praise. That biographer comments that Darrow never quite saw, or admitted, this inconsistency in !his own views

Religion

Christianity (۱

Determinism in Christianity starts with the story of creation of Adam and Eve as :described in the book of Genesis

And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat (۱)

Thus, from the biblical point of view from the time the Adam and Eve were created in the Garden of Eden. God said, "Adam!" Adam said, "Eve." And, Eve said, "The .serpent."! Thus began the pattern of blaming others

Determinism is important in Christian theology. One of the basic tenets of traditional Christian theology is that god is Omniscient and Omnipotent, and that every human action is foreordained by God. This doctrine seemingly precludes the existence of .human free will

Because morality, duty, and the avoidance of sin are also basic elements in Christian teaching, how, it is asked, can people be morally

---

۱- Genesis ۳:۹-۱۳

responsible once predestination is accepted? Many attempts have been made by theologians to explain this paradox. Saint Augustine (۳۵۰-۴۳۰), the great Father and Doctor of the Church, firmly believed in predestination, holding that only those elected by God would attain salvation; no one however knows who is among the elect, and .therefore all should lead God-fearing, religious lives

The celebrated French bishop and pulpit orator; Jacques Bossuet (۱۶۲۷-۱۷۰۴) offered another approach, which became widely held; he stated that fee will and divine foreknowledge are certain truths that must be accepted even though they are not (logically connected. (Extracted from Encyclopedia of Encarta

Islam (۲

Mainly two doctrines; Ash'ari and Mo'tazeli. The mainstream of Sunni Muslim follow the Ash'ari school of thought which is more on determinism. Mo'tazelists in turn .believe in absolute free will

Abu-Ishaq Esfrayeni (who believed in free will) met Qadhi Abdul-jabbar (who believed in determinism) and told him: "Glory to He who is free from committing a sin". Meaning .as a determinist you hold god responsible for all the sins

Qadhi turned around and told him with no hesitation: "Glory to he who nothing !".happens in his kingdom but what He Wills

Philosophical Justification

point

If all people have is an illusion of behavioral choice, if people are just machines behaving in the only way they can, then what about personal responsibility? How can we hold people responsible for and punish them for their behaviors if they have no ?choice in how they behave

Prof. Daniel Dennett (lecturer at Tufts University in the USA) in his

book ‘Elbow Room’ gives a two part answer to this question. First, we hold people responsible for their actions because we know from historical experience that this is .an effective means to make people behave in a socially acceptable way

Second, holding people responsible only works when combined with the fact that people can be informed of the fact that they are being held responsible and respond to this state of affairs by controlling their behavior so as to avoid punishment. People who break the rules set by society and get punished may be behaving in the only way they can, but if we did not hold them accountable for their actions, people would .behave even worse than they do with the threat of punishment

.This is a totally utilitarian approach to the issue of responsibility

Paradoxes of Freedom in a logical argument

There is No Moral Responsibility

.(Premise ١:Every action is either caused or uncaused (i.e. a random occurrence

Premise ٢: If an action is caused (recall Darrow), then that action was not chosen freely and the person who performed that action is not morally responsible for what .he/she has done

Premise ٣: If an action is uncaused (i.e. is a random occurrence), then the person who .performed that action is not morally responsible for what he/she has done

!Thus, ware not morally responsible for what we do

Norman Swartz

The reality is that modern philosophy has failed to suggest any convincing answer to the paradox and at the end, they have reached the same conclusion as the average man on the street if not worse than that, as

some like Dennett suggest at the end that we have no real behavioral choices, but we continue to behave as if we do! Or to say: God has not revealed it to us yet. Grin and .bare it until I solve the paradox for you

The common mistake of thinkers in the paradox of free will and determinism is that the assumed free will is equal to chaos and if free will accepted then people become totally unpredictable and chaos reigns. And also if the action is caused then the action was not chosen freely. Thus, Swartz put the ۲nd premise of the argument in the .paradox of freedom

As I will explain further in this chapter, we agree with the law of cause and effect and that every action is caused, and that the person is also responsible for his/her action .without any contradiction involved. For his freedom of will is one of the factors as well

point

The following is the standard argument for epistemic determinism. It alleges to show .that foreknowledge is incompatible with free will

:Secular version (۱

.□ If x knows that you are going to do (some action) A, then you must do A

.□ But if you must do A, then you have no choice in the matter

□ Thus if x knows (beforehand) what you are going to do, then you have no free .choice

.foreknowledge is incompatible with free will

:Theist version (۲

• God is

Omniscient.

- If God is Omniscient, then I must choose what God knows I am going to choose.

Thus: I'm not truly choosing.

Conclusion

- If I'm not choosing, then I'm not morally responsible for my deeds.
- Believing in Omniscient God leads to the deterrence theory of punishment and praise.

Epistemic Determinism (The problem of foreknowledge)

Discovering the Fallacy

١. Knowledge about the past:

'Imam Ali (a.s) was murdered by Ibn Moljam.'

Today I ask: Who killed Imam Ali (a.s)?

Mr. A: Shemer

Mr. B: Ma'moon

Ms. K: Ibn Moljam

Ms. D: Wahshi

Did Ms. K's asserting a truth today somehow or other 'FORCE' Ibn Moljam to kill Imam Ali?!

Obviously not.

٢. Knowledge about the future:

'Imam Ali (a.s) was murdered by Ibn Moljam.'

?In the year ١٠ AH I ask: Who will kill Imam Ali

Mr. J : Shemer

Mr. M: Ibn Moljam

Ms. C: Ma’moon

Ms. D: Jo’deh

Will Mr. M’s asserting a truth in the year ١٠ AH somehow or other ‘FORCE’ Ibn Moljam !?to kill Imam Ali

.Obviously not

:Natural Laws .٣

’.There will be a lunar eclipse on ٣٠ December ٢٠٠١‘

:Today (١٠ August ٢٠٠١) I ask

?When will be the next lunar eclipse in Australia“

Mr. A: Oct. ١٢

Mr. B: Dec. ٣٠

Mr. C: Dec. ٢٥

Mr. D: Nov. ١

Will Mr. B’s asserting a truth today about the lunar eclipse somehow or other ‘FORCE’ !?the eclipse to occur

.Obviously not

Descriptive Laws Prescriptive Laws

- .Natural Laws are Descriptive

• Moral Religious Laws are Prescriptive.

Fallacy Discovered

point

(if X knows that I'm going to do A, then I must to A) It must be that.

Answer:

• It is not true that if X

p: ١٠١

knows that I'm going to do A, then I must do A.

- I will do A whether X knows about it or not.
- X's knowledge is not the cause of my doing A.

Conclusion

- Foreknowledge no more 'forces' the future to be a certain way, than true reports in history books 'force' the past to have been a certain way.
- Free will is compatible with believing in Omniscient God.
- Man is determined to have free will and hence, responsible for his/her deeds.

Compatibility of Determinism Free Will

Points:

۱) The law of cause and effect is a universal law both in the physical world and in human behaviour. Denying this law is equal to chaos and accidence, which results in no law and reality in the world.

۲) Man has a behavioral choice and every healthy person feels this naturally. Hence, even Darrow expects a high praise. Whereas, if his clients were not to be blamed due to deterministic factors, he is not to be praised for the same reason!

۳) There is no correlation between the law of cause and effect and man's determinism, rather if there is no law of cause and effect man cannot have any freedom of choice. On the other hand, there is no correlation between chaos and man's freedom of choice. If there is no cause for human behaviours, then it random occurs which means the human himself also has no control or power over his actions. Then,

?where is his freedom of choice

Free Will Determinism in the Quran

- Satan; the founder of Determinism: ۷:۱۶
- Determinism; the excuse of infidels: ۶:۱۴۸
- A myth called 'Predestination' ۸:۵۳
- Man's free will: A Quranic Principle: ۱۸:۲۹
- :A Myth called: Societal Determinism
  - The magicians of Pharaoh: ۲۰:۷۰-۷۲
  - The wife of Pharaoh: ۶۶: ۱۱
  - The son of Noah: ۱۱: ۴۶

...If predestination, then

- ?Why do we sometimes regret the past
- ?Why do we blame the evil-doers
- ?Why do we praise the righteous ones
- ?Why do we educate our children
- ?Why do we strive for moral values
- ?Why do we repent
- ?Why do we judge the criminals
- ?Why do we punish the criminals
- ?Why do we protest to transgressors

• Why do we feel sorrow or happy about the past?

For Further Study

• Man Destiny: The late Ayatollah Motahari

• Talab Wa Eradeh: The late Imam Khomeini

• Elbow Room: Dr. Daniel C. Dennett

• Free Will and Determinism: Dr. Norman Swartz

• The Foundations of Morality (Chapter ٢٧): Henry Hazlitt

Chapter ١٣: Monotheism, the Common Word

point

Unity of God is the common word of all prophets. It is the essential part of all the divine religions. But why there is only One God? Why can't be a company of gods creating and governing the universe?!

You will also learn that the Christian doctrine of Trinity is incompatible with Monotheism.

This chapter aims at introducing the most fundamental aspect of all divine religions, a foundation on which all other religious issues stands; a touchstone by which everything else must

.be attested

As a matter of fact, believing in God, requires His unity. In other words, if there is a Creator and Sustainer for the universe, He must be One and only One. Thus, even those who supposedly believe in more than one god, they attempt to unify them to .one godhead, and hence plurality of god has no logic

Proofs of unity of God

Infinite Being (۱

point

This proof is suggested by Mulla Sadra. The similar concept of it is also suggested by Aquinas, St Thomas (۱۲۲۵-۱۲۷۴), the Angelic Doctor and the Prince of Scholastics Italian .philosopher and theologian

.Premise ۱: God is necessary infinite

.Premise ۲: There is no plurality in an infinite being

.Thus: There is no possible plurality in godhead

God is necessarily infinite. If several were to exit, none of them would be really infinite, for, it is impossible to have more than one infinite being. The reason being, each should have some perfection not possessed by the others. In other words, there must be an end for the existence of one of them, so that there would be a room for .the other to exist, which results in finite of them

For instance, if A B were to owe a farm, then each one must owe only a limited piece of land. But if A or B owns a farm which covers the entire Earth, then there is no room .for the other to owe anything

God is necessarily infinite Being, which means His existence is limitless and hence no .room for any other to exist

Therefore, the essence of

Godhead necessitates His Unity. The Holy Quran referring to this proof states: “ Allah bears witness that there is no god but Him ” (١) or: “ He is the First and the Last, the ” Appearance, and the Hidden

?Why God is necessarily infinite

.At least for the following three reasons, we understand that god is infinite

Finite means limitation and limitation mean god is limited in existence, knowledge, (١ power, etc. A limited god like other limited and finite creatures is just like other creatures and need to depend in his existence, knowledge and power to an unlimited .being

Existence is the opposite of non-existence. A being which is necessarily Existent, (٢ .has no possibility of non-existence

The chains of causes and effects in this world must reach the first Cause whose (٣ .existence is necessarily and independent from others

Universal Unity (٢

.Premise ١: The universe is harmonic

.Premise ٢: Any harmonic universe needs one conductor

.The unified universe has One Creator

The universe as it initially appeared to us, is the combination of billions of different objects; from a tiny cell to the super-giant galaxies. Nonetheless, in spite of this plurality, a closer look suggests that there is a universal unification linking and joining all seemingly separate parts of the universe together and the more the secretes of .nature discovered the more this unity is realized

The most acknowledged theory for the beginning of the universe is the big Bang theory proposing that the universe was created in a gigantic explosion and that the various elements observed today were produced within the first

۱- Refer to Ayah ۴:۱۸

few minutes after the big bang hydrogen and helium would have been the primary products of the big bang. At ١ microsecond after the Big Bang, protons and neutrons .dissolve into individual quarks, so the universe was a 'gas' consisting of quarks

Astronomers assert today that the entire universe we can see is made from matter of the kind we find near us, and in about the same abundances of the elements .everywhere

As mentioned in the chapter ‘Finger prints of God' all galaxies gravitationally .'interacting and orbiting about ‘a common centre

For this reason, a natural law governing an atom is also governing the entire universe. The same gravitational law governing the fall of an object here on earth governs all .the celestial bodies in the sky

Thus, Newton by observation of the fall of an apple in his orchard discovered the gravitation and conceived that the same force governed the motion of the Moon and the apple and hence gravitation is universal. Similarly, Newton’s laws of motion or .optics apply to the earthly objects as much as the celestial ones

There are millions of animal species on earth, yet despite this plurality their structure .is quite unified

The law of cause and effect is also another universal law in the nature, whether man has discovered all the causes of an effect or not, philosophically there is a .cause/causes for every effect

Therefore, the operation of the nature is like a harmonic symphony, which demonstrates the great harmony of creation. Every creature is like a musical

pulse, which is made up of the sum of many pure sine-wave tones, playing harmonically in the orchestra of the universe. This universal orchestra proves that .there is only one conductor directing the orchestra in performance

.If there were more than one God, disharmony would prevail

?Q. Why can't be the company of gods who are wisely governing the universe

If there is more than one god for the universe, either they are all the same in everything or totally different, or there are some similarity and some differences .amongst them

Plurality of gods mean that they are not totally same, for, if they were the same in all aspects then there would be one not more than one. On the other hand, plurality means there are differences, and if there are differences there must be disharmony .and chaos in the universe

For instance, God is Omni-wise, and there cannot be two or more omni-wise, because plurality requires that they are not the same in their wisdom, which means one is wiser than the other and the one who is less wise lacks some wisdom and lack of .wisdom is insufficiency whereas there cannot be any insufficiency in God

Mathematical distinction (۳

If there were to be two necessary beings, there must be at least one distinction factor between them so that one possesses something that the other lacks. That distinction however must be also a necessary being, or else the two necessary beings cannot be necessary in their essence. Thus two imagine two necessary being we need another

.necessary differentiating being, which results in three necessary beings

Similarly as they are all necessary beings, there must be a different between then or else they are the same. In order to differentiate between the three necessary beings we need at least two other necessary differentiating beings, which result in five .necessary beings

Again to differentiate between five necessary beings, we need at least three necessary differentiating beings to differentiate between the five necessarily beings, which results in eight necessarily beings and the calculating goes on infinitely which !results in infinite necessary beings

Unique invitation (۴

God is the source of perfection and blessings. It is not possible for such Perfect Being to deprive others of that perfection and blessing. Thus, if there were more than one God, he would have introduced himself through his messengers or other ways, whereas, all the prophets and messengers have invited to One Unique God, therefore .there is no any other god than Him

Trinity

Although all divine religions advocate to the 'unity of God' Judaism, Christianity and Islam as the main living divine religions are more known for the concept of monotheism. Thus, they are sometimes classified as Abramic Religions for their .monotheistic concept

Among the followers of all the divine religions, however, the mainstream church formulated in the ۴ th century the doctrine of Trinity. The classical Western formula of Trinity is: " three persons in one substance (homoousios) not a similar substance (homoiousios). By three persons they mean: 'god, the father, god the son, and

god; the holy spirit. According to this doctrine, God incarnated in the person of Jesus .Christ

The term Trinity is not used in the Bible and Nazorean Jewish Christians, who were in the time of Jesus looked upon him not as God but as a prophet and anointed Messiah. Historically the mysterious term 'Trinity' was first used in the ٢ nd century, by the Latin theologian Tertullian, but the concept was developed in the course of the debates on .the nature of Christ between Arius and Athanasius in the ٤ th century

In the words of the Athanasian Creed 'the Father is God, the Son is God, and the

".Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God

!?Since When Jesus became god

In the first century, after the disappearance of Jesus, those who followed him continued to affirm the Divine Unity. This is illustrated by the fact that the Shepherd of Hermas, written in about ٩٠ A.D. was regarded as a book of Revelation. The first .commandment was believing in One God

According to Theodore Zahn, the article of faith up٠ until about ٢٥٠ A.D was, "I believe in God, the Almighty' (١) Between ١٨٠ and ٢١٠ A.D. the word 'Father' was added before the 'Almighty'. This was bitterly contested by a number of the leaders of the church. .Bishop Victor and Bishop Zephysius are on record as condemning this movement

As the teaching of Jesus was spread, it came into contact with other cultures and into conflict with those in

---

Articles of the apostolic Creed, Theodore Zahn pp.٣٣-٣٧ from Jesus, Prophet of - ١ Islam p.٩

authority. In Greece , especially, it became metamorphosed, both by its being expressed in a new language for the first time, and by its realignment with the ideas .and philosophy of that culture

It was the many-gods viewpoint of the Greeks, which largely contributed to the formulation of this doctrine of the Trinity together with the gradual elevation of Jesus .by some, notably Paul of Tarsus, from a prophet to God

It was only in ٣٢٥ Ad that the doctrine of the Trinity was declared to be the orthodox .Christian belief. Even then, some of those who signed the creed did not believe in it

That historic decision was more based on a political expediency shown mainly by the part played by Constantine, the pagan emperor of Rome, who presided over the .council of Nicea, than on the faculty of Scriptures

.As a result, Rome replaced Jerusalem as the centre of Pauline Christianity

The doctrine of Trinity since the time of Constantine became officially accepted as the basis of Christianity in Europe. But as it soon caused much confusion among people .many were told to believe it without trying to understand it

Yet, broadly speaking, these schools of thought developed regarding trinity to be .explained

The first is associated with St Augustine , who lived in the ۴ th century and was of the view that the doctrine could but be proved but could be illustrated. St Victor, who lived in the ١٢ th century, is associated with the second school, who believed that the doctrine could

both be demonstrated and illustrated. And the ۱۴ th century saw the growth of the ۳ rd school, which believed that the doctrine of Trinity could be neither illustrated nor .proved, but should be blindly accepted and believed

The author of the fourth Gospel was the first to identify Jesus with the Logos or Word who became flesh for the salvation of mankind. In early Christianity he was also .regarded as the ‘image of God', not the eternal God himself

The Council of Nicea

In early decades of the ۴ th century two opposing views, the view held by the Presbyter Arius that stated Christ was similar in substance (homoiousios) with the Father, whereas the Bishop Athanasius held the view that Christ was the same .substance (homoousios) of the Father

Arius argued that Jesus was the firstborn of the Father, was created by the Father and thus was a creature, although the first and highest creature. Arius logically deduced that if the Son was begotten by the Father, there must have been a time when the Son did not exist, that is, before his creation by the Father. The Son .therefore, had a beginning

The debate was brought to the attention of Constantine the Great, emperor of Rome that the controversy might threaten the unity if his empire. In order for Constantine to settle the dispute concerning the nature of Jesus Christ he summoned an ecumenical council at Nicaea; an ancient city now Iznik, in Turkey in ۳۲۵ AD. Of the ۱۸۰۰ bishops in the Roman Empire, ۳۱۸

.attended the council

The Great emperor attended the Council and allowed various debaters to speak by turns. After an intense controversy a confession of faith was drawn up at the order of Constantine and was singed by all the bishops affirming that Jesus Christ was ‘Very God of Very God' and ‘of one substance with the Father by whom all things were '.made

And all the papers of the Arius' book were burned. All those who refused to sign the creed were threatened by the Emperor with banishment. Naturally, all signed. However, some of them regretted what they had done at the council and wrote a letter to the Emperor stating: “We committed an impious act, O prince, by subscribing (to a blasphemy from fear of you.” (١)

It is indeed sad that the creed of faith professed by millions of Christians since the ۴th century was born amidst this sorry scene and was at one time considered .blasphemous

The earliest draft of the creed known to us today, and the one that was agreed upon :at the council is

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of all things, visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father; he is begotten, that is to say, he is of the substance of God, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten and not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things, both

---

Ian Wilson, Jesus the Evidence. P.١۶٨ -١

.in heaven and on earth, were made

Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and took our nature, and became man; he suffered and rose again the third day; he ascended into heaven, .and will come to judge the living and the dead. And we believe in the Holy Ghost

The holy catholic and apostolical church condemns all those who say that there was a period in which the Son of God did not exist; that before he was begotten, he had no existence; that he was called out of nothing into being; that he is of a different .substance from the Father; and that he is susceptible of variation or of change

http://www.essene.com/Church/Conspiracy/CouncilOfNicea.html [۱۴] The Council of) (Nicea

?Do Christians really believe Jesus is God

Yes, apart from the above-mentioned Nicean creed which clearly states the Deity of Jesus, Christian Doxology is also another proof of that. Doxology means praising God (in glory. Christians they say it not only to God, the father, but to Jesus as well. (۱

A mystery called Trinity

An eminent scholar of Christian history admits that the present-day Christianity is a 'mask' on the face of Jesus. Muslims believe in Jesus without the mask. This in a nutshell, has been the point of difference between Islam and the church for the last ۱۴۰۰ years. Even before the advent of Islam, the Arians, the Paulicians, and the Goths, .'to mention only a few accepted Jesus, but rejected the 'mask

The Christina faith contains mysteries and Christian theologians admit that the doctrine of Trinity is

---

See: II Timothy ۴:۱۸, Revelations ۱:۶ -۱

one of them, and hence cannot be logically explained. Thus, the sole so called proof for so-called the Blessed Trinity is the Bible mainly the Gospel of John not even the synoptic. They also attempt in explaining the Trinity in terms of analogies involving .clover leaves, the appearance of water as ice, liquid and steam

Trinity Vs Unity

point

If you have a Christian background, I suggest you free yourself from the Councils and Creeds as well as the fear of being labeled a "heretic" by friends and relatives, and then you will find in the following passages the chance to confirm what you always suspected, the chance to replace nonsense with sense, the chance to replace trinity .with Monotheism

Monotheism, the Chief Commandment (۱

The Ten Commandments is spinal core and the common word of all divine religions, which presents the main articles of faith. Although the details of some of the Commandments are not exactly the same in the Old Testament, New Testament and the Holy Quran, yet at least the very First Commandment, which deals with the unity of God, is the same in all of them. The following is the quotation from all the tree :scriptures

a. The Old Testament: "You shall have no other gods before My face. You shall make for yourself no idol in the likeness of anything in the heavens above or on the earth (below or in the waters under the earth."(۱

b. New Testament: When one of the scribes asked Jesus "which is the chief commandment of all" Jesus answered: "The chief one

---

Exodus ۲۰:۳-۵ -۱

is, ‘ Hear O Israel : The Lord our God is one Lord, and you shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, with your whole mind, and with your (whole strength .” (۱)

c. The Holy Quran: “Say (O Mohammad): Come I will recite what your Lord has (prohibited you from: Join not anything as equal with Him”. (۲)

Therefore, believing in One God is according to the words of Jesus (peace be on him) the chief of the Ten Commandments and obviously when he said: “OUR God is one Lord” he included himself. How is it then possible for him to be of ‘the same substance of God' and ‘very God of very God'? It is not the most impious act and accusation to .Prophet Jesus? Thus, Trinity is very unscriptural

Trinity was blasphemy for the early Christians (۲

!Trinity is plurality of gods (۳

Christians admit the very differences between the persons of Trinity, which leaves no shadow of doubt that they are neither equal to each other nor are they to be identified with one another. The Father begets and is not begotten; the son is .begotten and not a father

If the three are one, why Christians consider it a sin of heresy to replace the order of the three; meaning by reversing the formula: ‘In the name of the holy spirit, and of the son , and of the father'?! For if they are absolutely equal and coeval, then order of .precedence need not be so scrupulously observed

Trinity is illogical (۴

Common sense and logic is the universal means of exchange

۱- Mark ۱۲:۲۹-۳۰

۲- ۶: ۱۵۱

of opinions amongst humans. Through the means of logic one even from a different religious or cultural denomination can convey his opinion and make others .understand it

Christians say on the one hand that ‘there is only one God', and on the other hand declare: ‘ Yet in the one name there are three eternal persons.' The only conclusion is that they have a mathematical problem that even Einstein could not solve. Because we learned at school that one person plus another person plus another person are .equal to three persons, and they can never be one person

In other words, one cannot be equal to three, because one is the third of the three. In .the same way, one is not equal to a third. And vice versa, three are not equal to one

Those who maintain the unity of God is the trinity of persons tell us that ‘each person is omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal and perfect God; yet there are not three !omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal and perfect god, but one omnipotent ... God

We all- Muslims and Christians- believe that God is Omnipresent, that He fills and encompasses every space and particle. Is it conceivable that all the three persons of the Deity at the same time and separately encompass the universe, or is it only one of them at the time? To say ‘the Deity does this' would be no answer at all. For Deity is .not God, but the state of being god, and therefore a quality

Despite all the attempts

offered by Christian theologians in explaining the doctrine of Trinity, nothing more than some biblical proofs or analogies have been ever offered. Even the most prominent Christian theologians admit that Trinity is another name for mystery. Thus, on which basis do Christians expect non-Christians to believe it? Isn't this the God of Bible who says: " Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord". (١)

Does Trinity have a biblical proof?

No doubt, the term Trinity is never mentioned any where in the Bible. Rather Prophet Jesus like other Prophets called for One God.

When Jesus (peace be on him) said: "... Hear O Israel: the Lord our God is one God". He included himself as a loyal subject of his Lord God (٢).

When Jesus said: "I am ascending to my Father and your father, and to my God and your God' (٣) he puts himself and people in the same category before God. Thus, if Jesus was the son of God, so were all those of his community.

But even a man of average intelligence will conclude from the above passage that he means he is ascending to God of all around him including himself, and by Father he either means Adam, as his father and their father, or God but not in a literal meaning, rather as an expression of kindness and mercy of Him. Whatever meaning, however, one suggests, it includes his community as well.

Who did Jesus worship?

point

In the year ... a debate took place between Imam Redha (peace be on him), the ٨th Imam of Ahlul-bait,

---

١- Isaiah ١:١٨

٢- Mk ١٢:٢٩

٣- Jn ٢٠:١٧

and Al-Jatheliq the Christian archbishop at the royal court of Ma'moon. A part of the :debate reads

"?Imam Redha(a.s): "It is very unfortunate that your Jesus did not pray or fast -

Al-Jaetheliq: "This is not true. As a matter of fact, he was praying all nights and - ."fasting all days

Imam Redha(a.s): "Then, who was he praying to? Himself?! Does God pray and - "!?fast

!All gods died

The author of Al-menar in his interpretation of the Quran, quotes the story of three new converts to Christianity. After having studied under a priest for a while, the teacher brought them to one of his Sunday services. The father then asked them to explain to the crowd the meaning of the blessed Trinity! The following is the answer :offered by each one of them

A: "Father taught us that there is a god in the heaven, and another one on earth and ".the third one came to the second in the shape of a pigeon

.Father whilst being upset with his non-sense explanation, asked him to sit down

B: "Well! I think the father taught us that there were three gods. One of them was ".crucified and hence we are left with two only

The father loosing his temper and hope in them, turned to the third student whom he .trusted his intelligence and asked him to explain the Trinity

C: "The blessed Trinity means: God the Father, and God the Son, and god the Holy Spirit are three in one substance. And God the Son was crucified which means all

"!were crucified and we ended up with no god

Chapter ۱۴: The Alphabets of Religion

point

Heart asked: I desire a divine insight

Teach me if you have access to it

I said: ‘A', he said don't say anymore

It's enough if there is anyone at home

اول الدین معرفته

Monotheism and believing in one God is the foundation of all divine religions. Monotheism is the alphabet of religion by which all religious terms will be written and the accuracy of which will be measured. Failure to learn the alphabet of religion the student in religion may misread and misinterpret all other religious terms and .doctrines the result of which may not be far from polytheism or even atheism

If on the other hand, monotheism is understood correctly, all other religious beliefs can be understood correctly. Monotheism is not a merely subjective and theoretical principle with no effect on practicality of our lives. It is rather well mirrored on the way we live. Thus, grasping the true concept of monotheism has a direct impact on all .walks of life

For instance, A monotheist, does not but his trust save in God. He does not compromise or attempt to please humans to achieve his goals. A monotheist will never quit in his live no matter how striking the situation will be. A monotheist will never loose his hope in Almighty God, and hence, despair and hopelessness do not exist in his life dictionary. He is always enthusiastic, energetic and optimistic about the .future

A monotheist knows whom and how much he should praise

and respect. He will not fall into the pitiful of exaggerating the status of humans to .believe in their deity, nor will he ignore their high status of nearness to God

Exaggerating about the prophets and believing in their deity and divinity is due to the .lack of true understanding of monotheism

In Islam the first and the last lesson is about monotheism. Monotheism is the essence and the extract of Islam. It is the spirit of all Islamic teachings. Monotheism is the unique and the chief message of all prophets. It is the most profound and deeply rooted religious principle. All religious teachings and education should start with .monotheism and to it

If Islamic teachings are beans of pearls, monotheism is the chain, which connects them all together, makes a beautiful necklace. And if religion is a tree, monotheism is .the root an the trunk of the tree

The Head of Knowledge

One of the companions of the Prophet of Islam (saww) asked him what was the head :of knowledge? The Prophet replied

Knowing God as you are supposed to know Him. That to know Him with none similar " to Him; that He is One God; the Creator, Omnipotent, the First and the Last, the Evident and the Hidden, none is comparable to Him or like unto Him. This is knowing (God as He deserved to be known." (١

Teaching Monotheism during the war

During the battle of Camel (...) a man from the army of Imam Ali (a.s) asked him about :the meaning of 'Unity of God'. The army protesting him said

---

Behar Al-Anwar, vol.٣ p.١۴ -١

"!?You fool! Don't you see his striking situation, couldn't you ask him a better time"

To their surprise, Imam Ali (a.s) said to the army: "Let him talk! What the man is asking is what we want from these people." and then he explained to him the true meaning (of monotheism.(١)

Aspects of Monotheism

point

:Monotheism can be understood in four aspects

Unity of God in His Essence (١

Unity of God in His Divine Attributes (٢

Unity of God in His Action (٣

Unity of God in worshipping Him (۴

Unity of God in His Essence (١

point

.Unity of God in his Essence means knowing Him as One and a Unique God

The first thing we need to know about God is the true concept of his Unity. When we say God is One, what do we really means by that? Is it that God is One as the Sun in the solar system is one? Does it means that He is the first as in natural number '١' in .mathematics? Or the unity of God has much more profound meaning

(Numeral Unity or Unique Unity (Al–wahdatul–Adadiya or Al–wahdataul–Ahadiya

Having lived in the world of numbers many people may image the unity of God in a .numerical unity which means God is number ١

Numerical unity means something is 'one' although it is logically possible to imagine the second for it. For instance, moon is the one and only satellite of planet Earth,

however it is possible to imagine more than one satellite for it, as Mars has two .satellites

If a being is in such a way that we cannot even possibly imagine another one like unto

---

Ibid, p.۲۰۶ -۱

it, this is called 'Unique Unity (Al-wahdatul-Ahadiya). As discussed in the previous chapter, God is infinite and as such there is no room even to imagine any other god in (it. (Pay attention

For instance, astronomers up until now disagree about the limits of universe whether it is infinite or finite. Some astrophysicists suggest that the universe is infinite while others propose its limitation. If we agree that the universe is infinite then we cannot even imagine another physical universe, for whatever you imagine will be within our .infinite universe

The concept of Unique Unity of God is one of the most purely Islamic contributions about the true concept of God which was never discussed among other philosophers .or theologians

The Most Perfect Description of Unity of God

Chapter ١١٢ of the Holy Quran which is the Chapter of Purity in Monotheism describes :the unity of God in the most perfect way

." Say: He is Allah; the Unique (Ahad) .. and there is none coequal to Him"

:Imam Ali (a.s) in introducing this Unity of God in Nahjul-Balagha says

(He is One but not by the first in counting" (١"

The Imam also in response to the man who had asked him about the concept of unity :of God during the battle of Camel told him

O Bedouin! When we say God is One could have one of the four meanings, two of" them are impossible about God and the other two are correct. The ones which are not :possible are

To say God is One and you mean numeral unity. This is not true -

Nahjul balagah Sermon:۱۵۲ -۱

because when something doesn't have second, does not enter in numbers. Thus God considers those who said 'God is one of the three' polytheists. Similarly, if you say God is One and mean One in His kind, is incorrect, for it means you have imagined another .one like unto Him

But to say God is One in that there is none like or coequal unto Him is correct, as it is - correct to say God is Unique in His Essence in that there cannot be another one be it in (our imagination, mind, or outside. Such is our Lord God". (١)

'I' or 'WE'

If there is only One God, why God in the Quran in many instances refers to Himself ?utilizing the plural pronoun

(Eternity (Al-Azaliyyat

Another concept about Monotheism in His Essence that we need to be familiar with is about the true meaning of His Eternity. What do we mean by saying that God is Eternal or perpetual? When we say someone or something is eternal it normally means that it exists at all times without change; thus 'the eternal city' was an .appellation of Rome. Is it the same when we say God is Eternal? Nay

The Eternity of God does not only mean that His existence is timeless and He is perpetual. No doubt, He always existed and will always exist. But this meaning of eternity would limit God in time, whilst He is the Creator of Time and Place. In other ,words, eternity in the sense of being timeless

---

Ibid -١

means we have already assumed the span of the time and then imagine a being living .in it from the beginning of time to the end of it

The eternity of God, therefore, is not a timely eternity. He is eternal in that His existence proceeds time as He is the Creator of time. Thus, He is the First in the same way that He is the Last, for we cannot imagine any beginning or end for Him. This is the meaning of

)He is the First and He is the Last" (١ "

The Evident and the Hidden

Another Attribute of God in His Essence is His two Attributes of the Evident (Al-dhaher) .(and the Hidden (Al-baaten

The meaning of these two seemingly contradictory attributes is that God in his Essence is so Evident and Clear to all and the same time His Essence is so hidden from .our physical sensations

Let me explain this a little bit further. Everything has two types of existence. One its existence as it is, and the other, its existence as it appears to us. The existence of other things to us depends on our system of conception and situation under which we know about them. Our system of conception is limited to understanding things which are limited, have shape, colour, and sound, can be found in a specific time or place, .etc

God as He is Eternal and Infinite, is not limited to place or time and hence is hidden from our senses. Nevertheless, He is Evident in His own existence. In

---

.chapter ۵۷ of the Holy Quran Aya ٣ -١

other words, He is Evident due to His Perfect Existent of being Eternal and for the .same reason is Hidden from our sense due to their limits

یا من هو اختفی لفرط نوره الظاهر الباطن فی ظهوره

حجاب روی تو هم روی توست در هر حال نهان زچشم جهانی ز بس که پیدائی

Unity of God in His Attributes (۲

point

Unity of God in His Attributes mean as He is Unique in His Essence, He is Unique in His Attributes and with His Attributes. Unity of God in Essence meant the negation of any partner or one like unto Him for Him, and the Unity of God in His Attributes means denial of any plurality or combination or mixture in Him. In other words, His Attributes .are not separate from His Essence

For instance, when you are born you lacked knowledge, power and many other abilities that you gradually gained them later in your life, as you may gradually loose them again. Thus, the attributes of power and knowledge etc. are not essential with .your being; one day you gain them and the other day you loose them

Unity of God in His Attributes means that the Knowledge of God is the same as His Power and the same as His Existence and all other Attributes and they are the same .as His Essence

Proofs for the Unity of God in His Attributes

:I can suggest two proofs for that

.Premise ۱: Separation of Essence and Attributes requires limitation (۱

.Premise ۲: God is Unlimited

.Conclusion: There is no separation between His Essence and His Attributes

Premise ۱: Addition of Attributes to the Essence requires (۲

.combination

.Premise ۲: Combination is impossible in God

.Conclusion: God's Attributes is the same as His Essence

Imam Ali (a.s) in explaining the above fact says in his first sermon of Nahjul-Balagha: " And the perfect purity is to deny Him attributes (Which are separate from His Essence), because every attribute is a proof that it is different from that to which it is attributed and everything to which something is attributed is different from the attributes. Thus whoever attaches attributes to Allah recognizes His like, and who "... recognizes His like regards Him two

The Meaning of Allahu-Akbar

The Attribute of Knowledge

God is Omniscient which means He is all knowledgeable. Knowledge of God is one of the most important Divine Attributes. Nothing is this existing universe is out of His Divine Knowledge. Every drop rain, every leaf of a tree, every seed under the ground, ever living organism deep inside the oceans or billions of light years in the universe, .are all present before Him

His knowledge about billions years ago is the same as billions years to come. As a .matter of fact, there is no past, present or future for Him

Whether you whisper a word or utter it or even hide it in your mind, its all the same for Him and He knows about it. He even knows about your thoughts, before you are .conscious about them. Your intentions are at His presence as much as you action is

Although this fact, is mentioned in many parts of the Holy Quran, perhaps one of the best examples of

"!?it is in Chapter ۶۷:۱۴ which says: " Does not the One Who Created know

Proofs of His Knowledge

The Creator knows about His creatures (۱

Infinite God is everywhere (۲

The Impacts of Knowledge of God in our life

Under Absolute Surveillance (۱

Imam Sadiq (a.s) said to Ishaq Bin Ammar: "Fear God as if you see Him, for if you - don't see Him, indeed He sees you." (۱)

He also said: "He who believes God sees and watches him and knows what he acts - upon good or bad, and avoids the vicious deeds, then he is amongst those who feared the status of God and disobeyed his whim." (۲)

When Zolaykha by forced took Yousif to her bedroom, being ashamed of her idol she covered the idle with a cloth. Yousif said to her: "You are ashamed of your idol which does not hear or see, and expect me not to be ashamed of my God Who hear and "!?sees

God is with me (۲

You never feel alone in your difficulties of life. You believe no matter how striking the situation may be, God who is Omnipotent and Merciful knows about you and your .difficulties and hence will not leave you alone if you seek His assistance

"Chapter ۱۵: The Paradox of "I or WE

point

Unity of God is the cornerstone of Islam. Yet, we come across many Ayat in the Holy :Quran, which refers to Godhead with a plural pronoun. Consider the following Ayat

Creation (۱

We have created”: ۲۲ times“

[And indeed, We created man from dried clay of altered mud” [۱۵: ۲۶“

And We created not the heavens and the earth and all that“

Al-kafee ۲:۶۷ -۱

Ibid, p.۷۰ -۲

[is between them except with truth”. [۱۵:۸۵

[Or did We create the angels female while they were witnesses?!” [۳۷:۱۵۰“

[Is it ye who create it, or are We the Creators?!” [۵۶:۵۹“

(Yusuf Ali translation)

?Who answers the call (۲

(We answered his invocation”. [۲۱:۷۶-۹۰] (۴ Times“

?Who sends the revelation (۳

(و نزلناه انزلنا، انزلناه، نزلنا) We send”: ۳۱ times“

[Verily, We have sent it (the Holy Quran) down in the night of Al-Qadr”. [۹۷:۱

?(Who save(s (۴

((و انجینا - و نجینا We save”: more than ۳۰ times“

[And We saved those who believed and used to fear Allah” [۴۱: ۱۸“

?Who chooses (۵

[Truly, We chose him in this world” [۲:۱۳۰“

?Whom shall we worship (۶

Our worshippers” ۱۲ times“

[and of Us (Alone) they were the worshippers”. [۲۱:۷۳...“

To Find the Answer

!Chapter ۱۶: Who does it? God Or Me

Monotheism in the Work of Allah

The third aspect of monotheism is monotheism in the work of God. Unity of the work of God means to recognize that the world with all its systems, ways, causes and effects is the work of Allah alone and is originated from His will. Nothing in the world is self-existing including any action or work. There is no movement, effect or force, but does lead to Him the Almighty. If fire burns, if water grows the vegetable, its all because God has empowered them through certain laws in the nature. Hence, they .are all in constant need of Allah in their existence as well as their functionality

Q. Does this mean when the fire burns it is not really the fire which burns, its rather ?God? Doesn't this lead to the denotation of the law of cause and effect

How can one believe in unity of

?God in action and at the same time believe in the law of cause and effect

:When prophet Ibrahim as Quran is quoting says

(And when I am ill, it is He who heals me.” (۱“

?Is it Allah who heals or it is the medicine

Chapter ۱۷: God, the Problem of Evil

point

SYDNEY, ۲۶ Dec. ۲۰۰۱

Homes burned to the ground and hundreds of people were evacuated as firefighters .spent Christmas Day battling ۷۰ fires blazing across NSW and the ACT

Fanned by winds of up to ۹۰km/h, fires spread across the state from Ballina in the north, to the lower Blue Mountains, Glenmore Park in Sydney’s west, Helensburgh in .the south and Huskisson on the south coast

The Daily Telegraph ۲۶ Dec. ۲۰۰۱

INDIA , Nov. ۱۰, ۱۹۹۹

India cyclone death toll estimated at ۱۰,۰۰۰; epidemic feared

Francis said more than ۱۰ million were estimated to have lost their homes, livestock or livelihood. Many people were dying of starvation apart from gastroenteritis, he said. CNN ۱۰ Nov ‘۹۹

ISTANBUL, Turkey, Aug. ۲۰, ۱۹۹۹

Two devastating earthquakes hit Turkey within the space of less than three months “ during ۱۹۹۹. The first – with its epicentre at Izmit in Turkey’s heavily populated northwest – struck at ۰۳۰۲ hours local time on ۱۷ August. It left some ۱۷,۰۰۰ people dead and thousands more homeless. The second struck just ۱۰۰km away on ۱۲ .November, killing hundreds more

;Voices of Trapped People Still Heard; Death Toll Tops ۱۰,۰۰۰

Police Detain Three Contractors

Workers load the bodies of earthquake victims on a container truck after pulling them from beneath the rubble in

p: ۱۲۹

۱- Refer to ayah ۲۶:۸۰

Sakarya , Turkey . With so many corpses not yet buried, officials fear an epidemic of disease may follow Tuesday's earthquake. U.N. officials were quoted as saying as many as ۳۵,۰۰۰ were still buried beneath rubble, but Turkish officials refused to confirm that figure. There were, no doubt, thousands still buried."

ABCNEWS

Every now and then we come across striking news as above. The initial reaction of many of us is that we immediately sit up on our comfortable lounges in front of the TV ask: How could this happen? What kind of world is this? And finally: How could a Benevolent and Almighty God possibly allow such evil to occur?

You may be in a position to counsel people through their pain and grief, but you don't really confront the question until you are caught in tragic circumstances. It is then and only then that many questions will challenge your mind and test your faith. This chapter aims at helping you finding the roots of the problem and how to stand up to it creatively.

From the time that mankind began their life on earth; they have been the victims of many natural disasters, such as fatal bacteria and viruses, earthquake, flood, tornado, lightning, fire, draught. This bitter experience, for many, has made a considerable sense of the topsy-turvy nature of the world with a conclusion that our world does not seem to present a single, uniform goodness, under the guidance of a good God, but rather a distressing mixture of good and

.evil with no one apparently in final control

Historical Background

The problem of evil and insufficiencies in the world is one of the most ancient .philosophical problems that man has faced

In Greek mythology, Mount Olympus believed by ancient Greeks to be the dwelling place of mischievous bunch of gods. They are forever plotting against each other and .each other's devotees

Historically, man has been offering animals or even human sacrifices to please gods .of storm, flood, etc. Each god would have also his or her preferences in sacrifice

For example, Shango, the Yoruba god of thunder and lightning, has a taste for cock, sheep, crab, and turtle sacrifices. Some natural disasters still carry their mythical names. The name hurricane comes from the mighty storm god Hurikan. Volcano also .has its name from Vulcan, the god of fire in Roman mythology

In Christian theology evil act began right from the creation of Adam and Eve when .Adam disobeyed God and the original sin was committed

God and the problem of evil

Atheist philosophers are usually agnostic in that they claim there is no ample proof for .the existence of God without any claim of proof for the non-existence of God

In a debate between Bertrand Russell and father F. Copleston which was broadcast in ۱۹۴۸ on BBC, Copleston asked Russell: “Would you say that the non-existence of God can be proven?” Russell answers: “No, I should not say that. My position is agnostic.” (۱)۵۶

As a challenge to theism, however, the problem of evil has been posed in the form of one of the following

۱- Why I am not a Christian, p.۱۴۴

:dilemmas

Proving the non-existence of God: The topsy-turvy nature of the world as we (۱ experience it, is inconsistent with the existence of God. In order for God to exist, there must be a perfectly good world and if there is an evil in the world, which obviously is, it .proves that there is no deity and final control over the world

Proving the duality of deity: another dilemma that the problem of evil poses is a (۲ dualist approach to the universe. Dualism suggests that there are two major forces in .the world. One is the creator of all that is good and the other is the creator of evil

In the history of development of religion there has been some religions classified as forms of religious dualism. Manichæism for instance is a religion founded by the Persian Mani in the latter half of the third century and Zoroastrianism are regarded .classic examples of dualism

Limiting Divine Attributes: A very famous challenge to theism is that the existence of (۳ evil limits at least one of the three divine attributes of God. God is Omnipotent, Omniscient and Most Merciful and Benevolent. The argument as propound by the :Scottish philosopher; David Hume (۱۷۱۱-۱۷۷۶) is

.Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then He is impotent“

.Is He able, but not willing? Then He is malevolent

(Is He both able and willing? Whence there is evil?”(۱

In other words, ۱) either God is able to abolish all evil and He wills to do so, ۲) or

---

Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, ۱۷۷۹ -۱

He wills but is unable to do so, ٣) or He is able but doesn't want to, ۴) or He doesn't want and is unable to abolish the evil. The first hypnosis is against our findings and the .rest result in limiting God's attributes

This challenge suggests that unless one of the divine attributes is limited the problem of evil cannot be solved(١). Theists however disagree on limiting God's attributes, and .hence they need to find a solution for Hume's argument

Insufficiency of Wisdom: Finally that last but not the least challenge for theism (۴ posed by the problem of evil is that existence of evil proves that there is

no sufficient wisdom governing the world. They argue as why the wise God has not created the world in a way that no evil exist or is empowered? Why one has to be born .blind, another deaf and the third disabled? Insufficiency is not consistent with wisdom

Definition

In order for us to look for a solution for the problem of evil, we ought to firstly find out what the evil is all about. We usually label something evil when we assume its the cause of a harm any harm to us. Thus, Evil is that which is morally bad or wrong, or that which causes harm, pain, or misery. An earthquake is regarded an evil due to its .devastating harms and pain to humankind, so is a bloody war and a fatal bacteria

Initial Evil Real Evil

Many things may also initially appear evil and bad to us but

One of the most famous novels on the subject of God and evil is " When bad things -١ happen to good people" [٣] by Rabbi Harold Kushner. His son's long illness inspired him to write a book on the subject to help many who have been in the similar predicament as his. Yet, in spite of confirming that God is indeed all-good, he fails to affirm that God is also all-powerful

a closer and more precise look suggests that they are very useful and good. Similarly, we may consider certain things good for us in the beginning, but after a professional .consultation we conclude that it is evil and hence must be avoided

Imagine a very tempting food when you are ill in comparison to a bitter medication with a disgusting taste. Initially, your temptation desirous towards the food, and refrains from taking the medicine, in spite of the fact that the first is really harmful .and hence evil for your body and the latter is good

Therefore, we need to be very careful of which basis are we attributing an action or an event to be good or evil. Is it solely due to it's seemingly harm or benefit to me? Is it because it appears to be good or evil to me? Is it only harmful to me or to every body? Have I thoroughly examined all different impacts of it and then concluded that ?it's evil

Therefore, in the realm of humankind, the real good is what eventually beneficial for mankind, and bad is what eventually harmful. Thus, if there be a volcano or .earthquake or lighting with absolutely no harms to humans, is not regarded as evil

Similarly, if there were no difference physically or mentally between a disabled child and an able one, and they were both regarded normal, there would be no pain and .hence no evil would be concluded

Types of Evil

Another key point to arrive at the best answer

.for the problem of evil is to identify and distinguish between different types of evil

Leibniz (۱۶۴۶-۱۷۱۶) the German philosopher and mathematician in his famous book ' Essays in Theodicy (۱) on the Goodness of God' has divided the examples of evil into :three categories

Metaphysical evil: This is an evil, which has prevailed the present world. This is due .۱ to the limitation possessed by the world, which makes it by nature unable to be .possibly any better

Physical evil , which includes all physical phenomena that causes harm to man, from .۲ .bacteria, viruses to natural disasters like earthquake, volcano, and hurricane

Moral evil: all pain and suffering caused by man's misuse of the gift of free will, such .۳ .as all criminal acts

Out of all the three different types of evil, what has been really the major concern of the theologians, are the last two. Also, as the third type of evil is more of a moral discussion, is beyond the scope of this chapter. Thus, I shall be dealing mainly with .what is called natural evil that is by and large has no human cause behind it

Suggested Answers

point

As old as the problem of evil is, there has been, and is a considerable diversity of .opinions suggested about it. The following the major ones

Christian Responses

According to John hick; the contemporary theologian, there are three main Christian responses to the problem of evil: "The Augustinian response, hinging upon the concept of the fall of man from an original state of righteousness; the Irenaean response

Theodicy (justice of God) is a technical term formulated by Leibniz for attempts to – ١
.solve the theological problem of evil

hinging upon the idea of the gradual creation of a perfect humanity through life in a highly imperfect world; and the response of modern process theology, hinging upon the idea of a God who is not all-powerful and not in fact able to prevent the evils arising either in human beings or in the processes of nature." (۱)

The main traditional Christian response to the problem of evil was first formulated by St. Augustine (۳۵۴-۴۳۰) and has constituted the majority report of the Christian mind through the centuries, although it has been much criticized in recent times.

According to Augustine, evil always consists of the malfunctioning of something that is in itself good. He gives the example of blindness that is the lack of the proper functioning of the eye.

As for moral sins, he argues that the fall of angelic and human beings were the origin or moral evil and sin. And natural evils are the punishment of human sins. Thus, according to Augustine, "All evil is either sin or the punishment for sin."

As for physical evils, we know now that they existed long before human beings came upon the scene. Today signs of arthritis have been found in the bones of some prehistoric animals; that is hundred of millions of years before Homo sapiens emerged.

In short, Augustinian response, represent the Christian and Hebrew traditional philosophy according to which man has himself brought about the evil from which he suffers by transgressing the law of God, on obedience to which his

---

۱- Philosophy of Religion, p.۴۱

.happiness depended

.The second Christian response is that of Saint Irenaeus

The third response is a modern development in which a number of Christian .theologians have adopted known as process theodicy

Process theodicy holds that God cannot be unlimited in power but interacts with the process of the universe, which God has not created but is nevertheless able to .influence

A systematic version of this theology is offered by a leading contemporary Christian theologian David Ray Griffin's publication: God, Power and Evil: A Process Theodicy: " God does not refrain from controlling the creatures simply because it is better for God to use persuasion, but because it is necessarily the case that God cannot completely (control the creatures ." (١

According to Process Theodicy God is a part -though a uniquely basic part- of the universe itself, unable to either barrier its fundamental structure or to intervene directly in its evil, since it is not within God's power to prevent it. According to this, all .evils are just part of the actual process of the universe

Obviously this is a free ticket to ancient Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism of dualism, which is far from the God of the Bible let alone the Quran. Process' God is not worthy .of worship and praise since he is not an omnipotent deity

Chapter ١٨: God, and the Solution of Evil

point

In the previous chapter we discussed the problem of evil as the most fundamental .and ultimate problem that has been challenging the philosophers specially the theists

In summery, failure to solve the paradox of God and the problem

of evil and lead some to ۱) believing in non-existence of God, or ۲) believing in dualism, .or ۳) limiting God's attributes

In principle, we believe there is only one God who is the creator of all, who is infinite .and hence Omnipotent, Omniscient and Benevolent or most Merciful

The above statement will be understood only when the reality of evil is .comprehended

Evil is nonbeing

This answer was the doctrine of the Roman philosopher Plotinus (AD ۲۰۵-۲۷۰) and finds adherents among Christian philosophers from Scholastics to several modern .philosophers of note, Leibniz, for example

The main stream Muslim philosophers from Farabi (c.۸۷۳-۹۵۰) and Avicenna (۹۸۰-۱۰۳۷) .to Molla Sadra have also adopted this doctrine to denote the concept of dualism

This answer suggests that the analysis of evil shows that there are chiefly two types of evil. One which is nonbeing, and the other one which although is being but because they lead to nonbeing are regarded evil. Thus, evil tends to make that which ceases to .be

This obviously does not mean that what which is known to us as evil does not exist. No .doubt, blindness, earthquake, disease and the like do exist

All what we know as evil are either in fact lack of something or the cause of lack of .something, or else they are not evil. Let me explain this a little bit further

When we say something is bad or evil, what we really mean is that the thing in question lack something, is somehow incomplete. But to say that something is lacking in

.some respect is not to assign any positive or real quality to it

Ignorance' is lack of knowledge, poverty' is lack of wealth and death' is lack of life. Evil, then, considered in itself, is mere nonbeing, the deprivation of reality, whereas being and perfection are synonymous. Insofar as anything is real, it is perfect and .good

Similarly, if certain bacteria or earthquake or cyclone is bad, is primarily because they cause death or lose in any way which falls into the first category of nonbeing. Imagine a volcano with no harm, a spider with no poisonous sting, an earthquake with no .destructive effect, would they still be bad? Obviously not

You may agree with me that even a volcano would appear a fantastic firework. Thus, when you are sitting safe and sound in your lounge room watching a movie on twister .it is rather awesome

This answer aims at denoting the false doctrine of dualism, which would regard two influencing factors for the events; God for the good events and Devil for the evil ones. According to this analysis of evil, there will be no question of who created evil'? For .evil is directly or indirectly nonbeing and nonbeing does not need any creator

Relatively Evil

All attributes related to objects are either real or relative. An attribute is real when an object enjoys it irrespective of any other factor. Life for instance is the real attribute of living organism. Insofar as there is an organism it enjoys the attribute of life irrespective of

any other factor or object. One apple is one whether there is any other apple or not. .Thus, life and number are the real attributes of the objects

The relative attribute is when we compare tow or more than two objects and conclude an attribute. An object is small or big, short or tall, heavy or light in comparison to others. For instance, if your brother is ۲۲ tall and you are ۳۳ you are .taller than him

But you are short if you compare your height with Michael Jordan who is ۶۶! The .amazing biggest ant is thousand of times smaller than the smallest elephant

Under the shadow of the above explanation we can suggest that the second type of evil like earthquake and bacteria, which were the cause to nonbeing although they are not themselves nonbeings, but they are relatively bad. The fatal sing of a snake is .bad for us, but it is defensive means of survival for itself

Major pests such as Australian locusts when attacks human agriculture is evil and calamity for humans, and spreading of poison bait is evil and disaster for the pests. An erupting volcano and an earthquake that demand thousands of human life are considered by humans' natural disasters, but to a geologist or seismologist they are .natural phenomena

Without active volcanoes erupting and emitting gases, molten rocks and lavas there would be no life on earth. Earthquake can release energy thousands of times greater than the world's first atomic bomb. If this

energy is not released, there will be no life on earth. In addition volcanoes produce .landform and generously bring to surface all the hidden treasury of the earth

Thus, nothing is evil for itself or else it wouldn't exist. The reality of every being is also its being for itself and its own purpose of life. As humans we call things evil when they .are in conflict with our immediate interests

This reminds us of what Voltaire says: Evil signifies that which displeases us.(۱) We should, however, bear in mind that we are not the only creatures on earth nor the only one for whom this universe is created. As humans we are free in selection of the terms, but cannot imply our terminology to denote the existence of God or limit His .attributes

There will remain one question that couldn't God have arranged things so that no one ever suffered? Couldn't God made human beings immune to all disease? Couldn't God ?made the earth that no fatal earthquake or volcanoes needed

There are several answers to these questions. If you read the rest of the article, you .should be able to find satisfactory answers to them all

Evil Disappears in the Gestalt Outlook

Gestalt is a school in psychology that deals mainly with the processes of perception. Gestalt is a physical, biological, psychological, or symbolic configuration or pattern of elements so unified as a whole that its properties cannot be derived from a simple summation of its parts. In Psychology it mainly deals with thinking, memory, and the nature

---

۱- Candide, ch. ۳۰

.of aesthetics

One of the principles of cosmology is the correlation and harmony of all seemingly separate elements of the universe. The universe, therefore, should be observed as a Gestalt to see its correct image.

Philosophers from the ancient time to the present time by and large agree that the entire universe is a unified organism adding to it or omitting any part from it, disturbs the structure and the harmony of the universe.

Those who claim there could be a better world if God was really Benevolent and Omnipotent are suffering a very limited viewpoint and are not looking at the entire structure of the universe.

Let me help you with the aid of some analogies:

Remember da Vinci's Mona Lisa; one of the most celebrated portraits ever printed. Cut it into a jigsaw puzzle, and every piece, perhaps, will show nothing but a chaotic mixture of clashing colours.

But once all the pieces are fitted together, we see not only that the whole is beautiful but that each ugly piece makes its indispensable contribution to that beauty. May it not be the same with the universe?!

جهان چون چشم و خط و خال و ابروست که هر چیزی بجای خویش نیکوست

The universe is like eye, line, spot and eyebrow

That everything is beautiful in its due place

Another example is the simile of elephant in a dark room that Rumi mentions in his Mathnawi.

So, just as a work of art, which as a whole possesses high aesthetic value, contain elements that considered in themselves

lack aesthetic value, or even possess disvalue, so also the universe, which as a whole is the best possible contain elements which considered in isolation evil. Thus, the .world as it is- is the best possible world in which every element is as it could be

Moses in response to Pharaoh when asked him to describe his Lord to him referring to :this fact said

Our Lord is He who gave to everything its creation and then guided. ۲۰:۵۰

The term 'its creation' means nothing in this universe could be any different then what it is. Everything is so perfect in the way it is, if looked collectively. Imam Ali (a.s) says: Behold! This world would not be established unless in the way that God has made it with all its blessings and calamities and rewards in hereafter, or whatever He may wish that you do not know. Thus, should you any part of it confuse you, blame your .(ignorance(۱

Mola Sadra has dedicated a chapter in his 'Asfar' under the heading Chapter ۷: What the general public consider evil in this world, is in the will of God for the benefit of creatures.(۲) He then gives the example of death' as the most vivid example of evil .and in a philosophical analysis suggests that death is not evil in any sense

The story of Moses and the knowledgeable devotee of God' (Khedr) mentioned in chapter ۱۸ of the Quran is the best example to express the limitation of human knowledge and

---

Nahjul-Balaghah, Sermon ۳۱ -۱

Al-Asfarul-Arba'eh, vol. ۷, p.۶۱ -۲

the fact that as such he tends to assume things are evil, so far as he cannot with his .very limited knowledge- see any good in them

Therefore, things appear to us as evil because our viewpoint is limited; whereas God who sees the whole of things entire, sees that the whole is perfect and harmonious. .Thus, what ever- due to partial look- seems evil is universally good

There are certain things that if observed or considered individually seems evil as it may harm an individual, but when looked wholly is very useful and hence good. An earthquake may demand the life of some thousands of people, but safe the entire life .on earth

Evil; a platform to Perfection

The purpose of life is considered one of the puzzles of life. I shall discuss the issue in a separate chapter in the future. In short, from the Islamic point of view, man is created .to perfect themselves and to reach the nearness of the Most Perfect; the Almighty

The purpose of life is not to enjoy a hedonistic lifestyle. Man is on a road towards God .and his duty is to endeavour to that perfection

From a religious perspective, this world is the ladder of elevation and perfection. Our perfection in many instances is in the light of difficulties. Moral attitudes and virtues such as generosity, patience, sacrifice; scientific discoveries and innovations are indebted to calamities, which are supposedly evil. Without disease there would be no .medicine and medical discoveries

Suppose that, contrary to fact, this world were a paradise

from which all possibility of pain and suffering were excluded. The consequences .would be very far-reaching

For example, no one could ever injure anyone else; the murderer's knife would turn to paper or the bullets to thin air; the bank safe, robbed of a million dollars would miraculously become filled with another million dollars, human beings would be immune to all disease; men would be given flying wings, no unavoidable diminution of power in the aged, no birth deformation, no madness, no accidents, no natural disasters, playing child falling from a height would float unharmed to the ground; the .reckless driver would never meet with disaster

Then there would be no sciences, for there would be no enduring world structure to .investigate

In such a hedonistic world generosity, kindness, courage, compassion and charity and in short no moral and ethical values and virtues would exist anymore and hence it might well be the worst of all possible worlds. Thus, what we name as evil is in fact contributing to the world's perfection in such a way that without it, the world would .not be the best possible

Human history is rich with the examples of many people with disability whose .achievements are far higher than many supposedly healthy ones

Jim Abbot won Olympic gold in ۱۹۸۸ and been a Letterman. He is the only player in (major league baseball who was born with one hand. (He didn't have right hand

Prof. Stephen Hawking the most eminent physicist and astrophysicist of our time. His book ‘A

brief history of time' was the best seller for months. When he was ۲۱ he was diagnosed with ALS. This disease affects walking, speaking, swallowing and even .breathing

Today he is confined to a wheelchair, cannot move much at all, has trouble holding his head up and cannot speak. Yet, disagree to be name disabled. He believes he was put .in a challenge and has learned how to learn the challenge

Beethoven, who is generally considered one of the greatest composers in the .Western tradition, was deaf and could not hear his own symphony

.Thus, many apparent evils are in reality blessings

And it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you may like a [thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know. [۲:۲۱۶

.According to the Quran the ease and success are gained though difficulties

[Verily, along with every hardship is relief [۹۴:۵

I suppose the best expression of (seemingly) evil which gives birth to good, and (seemingly good) which gives birth to evil is expressed by the Prophet of Islam (saww): There is no evil which results in Paradise, and there is no good that which (brings about hell. (۱

Evil in the Quran

The term evil- for displeasing events and losses- is used in the Quran more than ۳۰ .times

Evil as well as good is sometimes serving the purpose of a trial for the sake of .perfection

And We shall make a trial of you with evil and with good and

Al-Tawhid, p.۷۴ -۱

[to Us you will be returned. [۲۱:۳۵

:This trial is explained further in chapter ۱۷

And when We bestow Our Grace on man, he turns away and becomes arrogant. And [when evil touches him, he is in great despair. [۱۷:۸۳

Evil is also regarded in the Quran a punishment of sinful acts. Many nations according .to the Quran have been destroyed by natural disasters due to their impious acts

So We took retribution from them. We drowned them in the sea, because they belied [Our Signs and were heedless about them.[۷:۱۳۶

This, of course, does not imply that all who drown are receiving their punishment. The Prophet of Islam (saww) once asked his companion about the meaning of martyrdom. They said that it is he who is killed in the warfare. The Prophet said: Then, who few the martyrs would be. He then counted those who innocently drown, or died when a .building collapsed on them as martyr

According to Imam Sadiq (a.s) the compensation that a bind or deaf if practices patience- receive in hereafter is so abundant: Then there is so much reward for those who became the victim of some calamities after their death- if they had been patient- that had after their death they been given the opportunity to return to this world to experience those calamities, they would have chosen to return to gain more (reward.(۱

It is also quoted from Imam Sadiq (a.s) for the reward of fever: Indeed, when a believer is affected by

---

.Remember the story of Abu-Baseer -۱

fever, his/her sins drop like the leaves of a tree. Then if he/she moans in bed, his/her moaning is glorification of God and his/her cry unification of God and his/her turnover .in bed gains him/her the reward of the one who fights with sword for the sake of God

:Points to be added

۱) ?Are they natural disasters or natural phenomena

۲) .If they are natural phenomena then they do not contradict the proof of order

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

:Address of the central office
Isfahan, Abdorazaq St, Haj Mohammad JafarAbadei Alley, Shahid Mohammad HasanTavakkoly Alley, Number plate ۱۲۹, first floor
Website: www.ghbook.ir
Email: Info@ghbook.ir
Central office Tel: ۰۳۱۳۴۴۹۰۱۲۵
۰۲۱ ـ Tehran Tel: ۸۸۳۱۸۷۲۲
Commerce and sale: ۰۹۱۳۲۰۰۰۱۰۹
Users' affairs: ۰۹۱۳۲۰۰۰۱۰۹

Introduction of the Center – Ghaemiyeh Digital Library